DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 278 833 CE 046 381

AUTHOR Craig, Robert, Ed.; Gerver, Elisabeth, Ed.
TITLE Lights in the Darkness. Scottish Libraries and Adult Education.
INSTITUTION Scottish Inst. of Adult Education, Edinburgh.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-903647-09-5
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 53p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Collected Works - General (020)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; *Adult Education; *Community Education; Cooperative Planning; Cooperative Programs; Educational Opportunities; Foreign Countries; Independent Study; *Library Cooperation; *Library Role; Open Education; Postsecondary Education; Publicity; *Public Libraries; *School Community Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Scotland

ABSTRACT

This collection is intended to show what public libraries can and would like to do to support adult learning, encourage understanding and cooperation among libraries and adult and community educators, and publicize the work already being done by libraries. The following papers are included: "The State of the Art in 1985," by Robert Craig; "Adult Education and Libraries: A Partnership?" by Anthony Cooke; "Adult Basic Education and Libraries," by Pablo Foster; "Library Support for Independent Learners," by Vernon Smith; "Open Learning: The Role of the Public Library," by Nigel Paine; "A Large Number of Small Steps: Broadcasting and Libraries," by James Boyle; "A Community Educator's View," by Peter Kearney; and "A Librarian's View," by James Orr. Also included are an introduction by Elisabeth Gerver a paper entitled "Prologue: From Incidental Learning" by Graham Wilson, and a paper entitled "Epilogue: An Educational Force" by Arthur Maltby. Suggestions for further reading conclude the collection. (MN)

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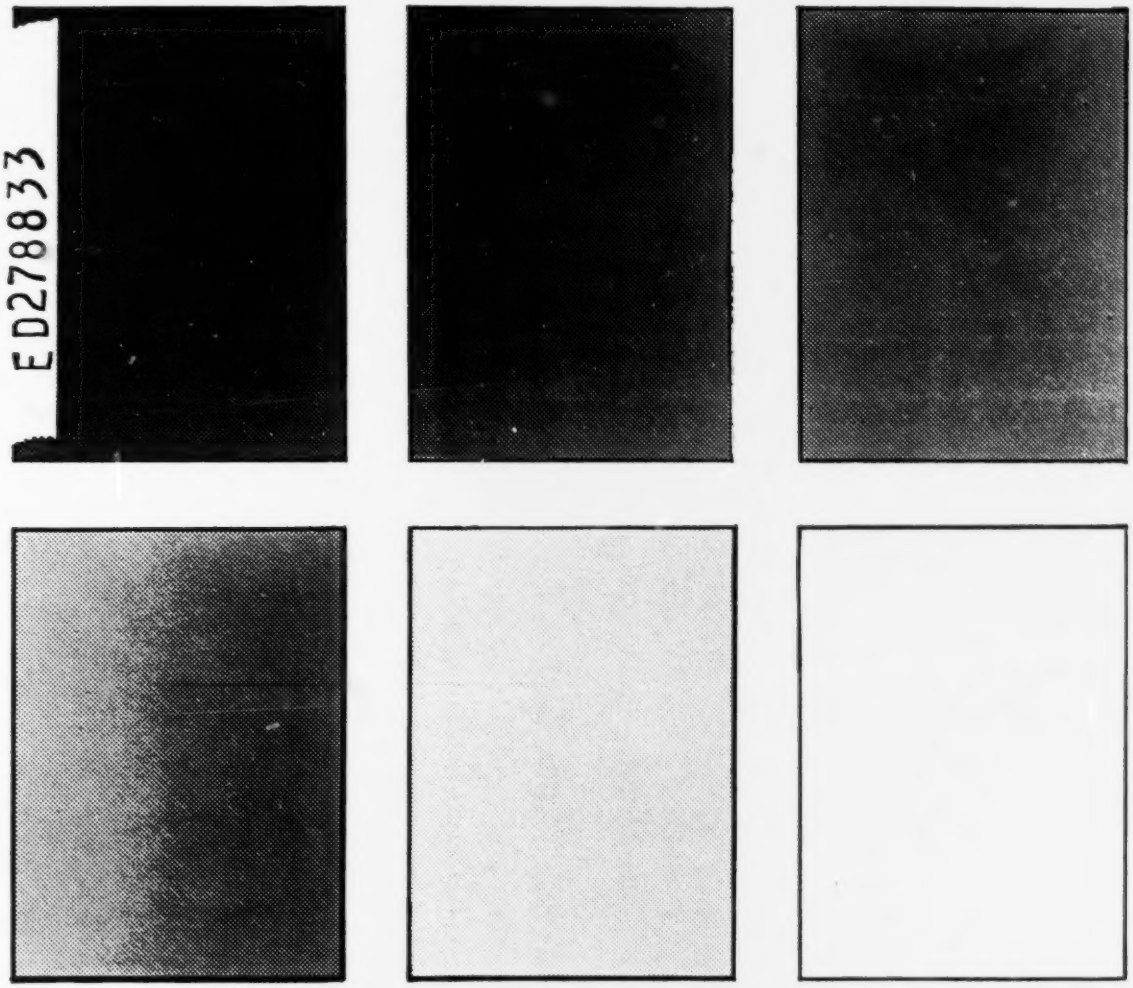

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LIGHTS IN THE DARKNESS

Scottish Libraries and Adult Education

CE046381

Edited by
ROBERT CRAIG and ELISABETH GERVER

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LIGHTS IN THE DARKNESS

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Edited by

Robert Craig and Elisabeth Gerver

Executive Secretary
Scottish Library Association
Motherwell Business Centre
Coursington Road
Motherwell

Director
Scottish Institute of Adult Education
30 Rutland Square
Edinburgh
EH1 2BW

Published by the Scottish Institute of Adult Education, in association with the Scottish Library Association, 1985

ISBN 0 903647 09 5

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Cover design by George Bowie

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INTRODUCTION

Elisabeth Gerver

This collection of papers aims to show what public libraries can do, and would like to do, to support adult learning; to encourage understanding and co-operation between librarians and adult and community educators; and, recognising practical difficulties, to give publicity to good work already being done, thereby providing a framework for progress. We hope that both librarians and adult educators can use the papers to talk further with each other, to sharpen for each other the focus of what each has to offer, and to seek still more ways of co-operating in support of both formal and informal adult learning.

The origins of the collection lie in networks of people who share common interests and enthusiasms. The first network was established in 1981, when a multi-agency liaison group was set up amongst the Scottish Library Association, the Scottish Institute of Adult Education and the Scottish Community Education Council, so that exchange of information would highlight potential areas for co-operation in the future. In 1983 the liaison group organised a meeting between Chief Librarians and Principal Community Education Officers in order to discuss ways of developing co-operation at local level, including information, rural, outdoor and adult education services. Now renamed the Library Education Group and having added Network Scotland Limited to its members, the liaison group has continued to meet and has been one of the forces behind the present publication.

A second network emerged in 1983, when HMI Mr Arthur Maltby wrote to all the Scottish public libraries to ask about the services which they provided for adult and community education. He asked specifically about information and advice for courses in adult and community education and about the appropriateness and use of library held resources in that area. In 1984 a serendipitous meeting on a train between Arthur Maltby and myself resulted in the germ of an idea to produce a publication which would both show co-operation in action and outline possibilities for still further collaboration in the future.

Early in 1985 Arthur Maltby therefore wrote again to all 41 district libraries, renewing his request for information about their support for adult and community education, and offering the Chief Librarians an opportunity to highlight whatever they wished within this general area. All of them responded, and the enthusiastic nature of the replies indicated the general willingness of Scottish public libraries to respond to the needs of adult and community education.

Meanwhile, the network of contacts had been strengthened by individual representatives of both the Scottish Library Association and the Scottish Institute of Adult Education. In 1983 Norman Turner, Motherwell District Librarian, had written an important article on 'Libraries and Community Education' in the Scottish Journal of Adult Education . Both Vernon Smith, the former Director of the Institute, and I had spoken over the years to meetings of librarians and had written for the Scottish Library Association News .

Despite these networks, however, there appeared to be little published material available on libraries and adult community education which might

provide a systematic framework for further co-operation and collaboration. During 1984, therefore, both the Library Education Group and the Institute's Publications and Research Committee agreed that the present set of papers should be commissioned and published by the Institute in association with the Scottish Library Association.

Throughout these papers the term 'adult education' refers to the multitude of systematic ways in which adults learn; it thus covers both formal learning within and without institutions as well as the kind of informal learning which is often characterised as community education. As the learning needs of mature students in educational institutions are by and large supported by the libraries of their own and other institutions, the volume focuses primarily on how public libraries can support the non-institution-based forms of adult learning, including voluntary groups, independent learning, home study and broadcasting.

We have not attempted to be comprehensive in our coverage. We have omitted a number of major areas of development in library support for post-compulsory education, particularly services for teenagers and the provision of bookshops on library premises. There is also very little coverage of important areas of community education where co-operation with libraries is often frtuiful, such as tenants' associations, Citizens' Rights Bureaux and women's groups. Moreover, there are significant issues which we have not attempted to address, particularly the question of gender in the use of libraries as an educational resource. There is also scant coverage of the problems of communicating across the local government boundaries, where community education services are a regional responsibility while public libraries come under the district authorities.

We are also conscious that many of the topics briefly raised merit at least an entire paper on the subject: the role of libraries in support of learning by and about computers; libraries as a source of educational guidance; the fruitful links between libraries and the WEA; the role of the public library in meeting the learning needs of older adults and of people who are unemployed; the partnerships developing between libraries and Network Scotland Limited, the broadcasting and adult information agency. In short, a second and even a third volume remain to be written! All we have offered here is a taste of the possibilities, intended to whet the appetite for more.

Despite these omissions, we hope to have covered a reasonably wide range of experience in the papers. The perspectives include those of continuing education, open learning, adult basic education, broadcasting, educational technology, community education, and the training of librarians. Most importantly, the views of the libraries themselves are well represented in the first major paper. All of these diverse contributions are framed by the view of HMIs with responsibility, respectively, for adult and continuing education and for libraries.

The volume begins with a prologue, 'From Incidental Learning...' by HMI Graham Wilson. He emphasises the over-riding importance of the knowledgeable and sympathetic people who provide information, advice and other guidance, who lie at the heart of the library service. He argues that the 'knowledge intermediaries' who work in libraries can achieve much for adult learning, even more if their efforts dovetail with those of educators.

Robert Craig's 'The State of the Art in 1985' draws on the responses to Arthur Maltby's survey of libraries to paint a detailed picture of how libraries themselves see their current role in support of the wide range of adult

learning. He draws attention to the increased emphasis on providing community information and the use of the new information technologies, particularly for meeting the needs of adult learners at a distance. He also considers the growing trend of trying to meet the needs of specific groups of learners. He notes, however, the constraining effect that the lack of resources has had on still further development.

Anthony Cooke, in 'Adult Education and Libraries: a Partnership?', writes of the continuing need for public libraries to offer learning resources, a need made even more compelling in the present economic climate. He makes a strong case for greater involvement of the libraries in information, advice and counselling in adult education and points to encouraging examples of Scottish developments in this field. Above all, he stresses that 'public libraries in Scotland offer a service which is ignored by adult educators at their peril'; both could benefit from a closer partnership.

In 'Adult Basic Education and Libraries', Pablo Foster depicts the challenge to the library services of the 'Heineken' people - the over 50% of the adult population who derive little benefit from existing education and libraries. He looks at the barriers which libraries present to full participation by all sectors of the community and argues that librarians should commit themselves to respond to people who are not traditional beneficiaries. He too sees the way ahead as being through partnership between librarians and adult educators.

Vernon Smith writes of 'Library Support for Independent Learners', emphasising their need for information, learning materials and facilities and learner support services. It may be, he suggests, that libraries now need to re-inforce their normal self-help service. He envisages the public library as a major local learning resource centre, actively promoting both independent learning and learning in community groups. But, like other contributors, he is concerned about the effect of financial cuts as tending to militate against the co-operation which is essential if independent adult learners are to receive the full range of support services which they need.

Amother part of the same territory is explored in Nigel Paine's 'The Role of the Public Library', which looks at open learning and how this new form of provision alters radically the potential role of the public library vis a vis the learner. Like other contributors, he sees a future in which a relationship between the providers of education and the library service will create a new relationship between the learner and his or her local library. In proposing ten action points for the public library, he attempts 'to put the learning back into the library.'

In 'A Large Number of Small Steps: Broadcasting and Libraries', James Boyle examines the relationship between broadcasters and librarians, suggesting ways in which both can co-operate to support adult learning. At present, he argues, the constituency of interest common to librarians and adult educators is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. By adopting the real method of diplomacy - an accretion of a great number of very small steps - librarians, adult educators and broadcasters can find openings for fruitful collaboration in mutual help.

The final two main papers are written from the perspective of a community education worker and a librarian respectively. Peter Kearney in 'A Community Educator's View' reflects the changes now being experienced in both formal and informal adult education and speculates on ways in which librarians could most helpfully respond to contemporary needs. He argues for the need both to broaden the idea of education and to respond more effectively to the needs of

specific groups of people.

In 'A Librarian's View', James Orr recognises the wide range of educational influences on adult learners and suggests that the strength of the library system lies in the freedom of choice which it offers to individuals. Because there are not unlimited resources, however, co-operation between libraries and the formal education system is essential. He sees considerable scope for public libraries undertaking more user-education programmes and increasingly acting as gateways to other materials and people.

The intended impact of the whole volume is best summed up in the title of Arthur Maltby's epilogue: Scottish public libraries are 'An Educational Force!' He fully acknowledges the real constraints but argues that 'the learning resource riches of libraries must be used and promoted effectively.'

The publication of these papers in itself represents a remarkable collaborative effort. The editors wish to thank all of those people who have made it possible: the librarians who replied so fully to Arthur Maltby's surveys; the committees which gave encouragement and sound advice, particularly the Library Education Group and the Institute's Publications and Research Committee; the contributors who, as well as writing at a time when many public services are hard pressed, often offered additional invaluable advice (most of the items on the list of further reading, for instance, were suggested by Vernon Smith); and Arthur Maltby, whose initiative, surveys, advice and sheer hard work were the bedrock of our editorial task.

But it has not just been hard work against deadlines that often seemed impossible. Both Robert Craig and I have learned a great deal about the realities and the possibilities for present and future co-operation between librarians and adult educators. And, in the best tradition of adult learning, we have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. We hope that readers too will find the results as informative, stimulating - and sometimes provocative - as we have done.

Elisabeth Gerver is Director, Scottish Institute of Adult Education

FROM INCIDENTAL LEARNING ...

Graham Wilson

One delight of writing an introduction is that I can be anecdotal and be excused. As a young student I first learned what my local branch library could do for me. It was a very small local library occupying a room at the back of a village hall and was served by a library assistant who turned out on three evenings and two afternoons per week to make available the shelves of mostly westerns, romances and classical fiction. A children's section accompanied a few shelves of oversize books in the small non-fiction section and in terms of immediately perceived resources that was that.

And yet I, and a number of others, studying at university, came to regard that particular place as the source of most of our support material. Why was this so? The answer lies in having known our librarian. She was always on the lookout for 'the book for you'. So elderly ladies with furtive glances around would whisper over the counter, 'Have you got the latest by Dorothy X?' 'Did you manage to keep me a copy of Y?' 'Can you recommend a good murder?' And the answer was always 'yes' or, if not, it was only for the offer of something better. For us, students that we were, the service was a trifle academically orientated. Many obscure and valuable texts were trundled out from the central library for our exclusive use and, I dare say in those heady days, many were specially obtained.

The significant points in this story are the degree of personal service provided by the individual members of the library staff, without which the service would not have existed; the fact that the location was not very important; and the ability of the branch, when dealing with fairly esoteric texts, to reach back into its long and deep pocket or wide external borrowing powers and produce the resource required. One can provide books and buildings but without knowledgeable and sympathetic people to provide information, advice and other guidance you do not, it seems to me, have a library.

The articles which follow come from a wide range of people who all have experience of the inter-relationships between the professionals in education and those in the library service. They are characterised by their high hopes for the expansion of opportunities for people to learn. Vernon Smith, for example, who was formerly Director of SIAE and is now researching libraries and learning for the Council for Educational Technology, writes of the importance of independent learning and the need for libraries to enable, encourage and sustain it. James Boyle reminds us of past successes and encourages us to develop further recent successful collaborative ventures.

In continuing education, by which I mean the courses pursued by adults returning to study after a period away from it, much of the learning is inevitably independent and self-directed. We all learn much in the process of work and daily living, from how to be a good, bad or indifferent parent to how to dismantle an engine or how to assemble a ready-pack wardrobe. DIY has called for the development of a whole new range of skills not required by earlier generations.

Some of what we learn is picked up incidentally by virtue of doing it; much is achieved when we are suitably aided and abetted. Adults returning to systematic study bring many acquired and ingrained habits and enforced circumstances which do not make them readily amenable to traditional forms of

provision designed primarily for young people in initial education. Nigel Paine points the way ahead to the opportunities, the needs and the technologies of the future. The open learning developments which he describes are particularly suited to the needs of returning adults and libraries have a clear role to play in the world he describes.

The single most significant development in the progression from incidental learning to purposive education was surely that which occurred when we developed the ability to record our thoughts in writing and to store this information for others to read and consider at a later time. The birth and growth of libraries was and continues to be crucial to our abilities to educate and be educated. The storage media may change; the mechanisms for access may enter our homes and offices; but libraries and the service as 'knowledge intermediaries' of those who work in them remain essential to our future civilisation. They can achieve much for adult learners; they can achieve even more if their efforts dovetail with those of the educators.

The universities, Workers' Educational Associations, further education colleges, local community education services and a host of other national and local organisations need a planned programme for communication and co-operation with libraries. Network, with its information and referral services, has a strong role to play in this, although the exact nature of liaison, or prospects thereof, will differ in various localities. All of our contributors speak of the need for such partnership and collaboration. Read what they say; reflect upon it in the context of your own circumstances; and then - armed with these thoughts - seek to contribute further to the growth of opportunities for men and women to learn how to live happier and more satisfying lives.

Graham Wilson is Her Majesty's Inspector, with responsibility for adult and continuing education

THE STATE OF THE ART IN 1985

Robert Craig

> The origins of the public library service in this country are rooted in a desire for education and self development. This is still one of the main areas of responsibility in the modern library service.

This view, expressed by a chief librarian, and echoed by a number of authorities, restates the traditional view of the role and importance of libraries in adult education. It recalls the sentiments expressed by the opening of Manchester Public Library in 1852 when public libraries were seen as vehicles for 'bringing education to the poorest hearths'.

These views were, however, shaped at a time when the society served by libraries was quite different from today and when there was a greater consensus about the functions of education. The consensus view has largely disappeared. The way in which libraries operate has also changed considerably, both in terms of the range of services offered and the manner in which these services are promoted. Do libraries then still see support for education as a 'main area of responsibility' and what services, if any, are they providing?

From the responses to HMI Mr Arthur Maltby's surveys in 1983 and 1985, it is possible to identify a number of major areas of activity.

Information Provision

Libraries have, for a long time, been in the business of supplying information about the area which the library serves. This information was often confined to lists of local clubs and societies and other public services available. In the last ten years there has been an increased emphasis on community information provision by libraries; as a result there has been a more comprehensive provision of local information, better dissemination of the information collected and a more professional packaging of that information for the public, an excellent example being Aberdeen City Libraries 'Community Contacts'.

Community information is also increasingly being provided not only within central libraries but at all service points. The developments in new technology such as Prestel, Teletext and micro computers, are increasing and strengthening this type of provision; for example, Bridge of Allan library has a micro computer data base covering educational opportunities in the area for retired people. This trend has improved the provision of information about educational opportunities, both formal and informal, available at local and national levels and has helped to publicise directly the work of all those involved in informal education, whether a local self-help group, the community education service or the WEA.

Aberdeen reports that 'our service points are widely used as publicity outlets for materials on ... educational opportunities'. In Hamilton, 'all publicity that comes to us, from whatever potential learning source ... is displayed in multiple at all service points'. Clydebank has found that 'most agencies, especially the local ones, come to us as a matter of course now with their publicity material'. In Bearsden and Milngavie, 'there is, naturally, particular emphasis on any local educational promotional literature', while

Strathkelvin stocks 'a very wide range of material on further educational opportunities, this includes college prospectus, material on the Open University, posters and leaflets on WEA, university and extension activities, and all night classes run in the area.... There is a brisk demand for this type of information'.

North East Fife comments that 'there is now an increasing awareness on the part of those involved in distance learning, educational broadcasting and ad hoc learning groups of the value of the library as a contact point with their potential clients'. This finding is reinforced by Motherwell: 'at a recent meeting of the (local) community education team, one team member commented that out of a survey of people attending her classes, approximately 40% had first heard of the class through the local library'. In East Lothian, in addition to providing information and publicity for community education programmes, libraries have also been used as issuing and collection points for a public questionaire on 'class suitability and identification of local needs'.

Libraries, however, are still reluctant to give advice on either appropriate courses or levels of courses, although they are quite happy to refer enquiries to other agencies and individuals. Clydesdale reports that 'there is little or no follow-up advice available' and in Argyll and Bute 'follow-up advice is limited, but libraries act as referral agencies and direct potential users to the correct person/department'.

A particularly interesting development in local information provision has resulted from co-operation between a number of library authorities and Network Scotland Limited. Network evolved from the adult literacy campaign of the mid 1970s as an agency of the Scottish Institute of Adult Education and developed into a unique organisation, bridging the gaps between broadcasting, information and education. Although the origins of the service lay in adult basic education, it soon became obvious that this type of service is relevant to a wide range of broadcasting, covering social, community and health education. Network Scotland Limited was formed as an independent agency in April 1984 and is one of three professional broadcasting support services in Great Britain, linking with radio and television, both BBC and IBA.

In 1985 a series of joint projects involving Network and library services in Aberdeen, Angus and Dundee were established. Information points, specially designed by Network, covering a wide range of community information, were set up in various libraries, and attended by library staff. Each information point included a telephone referral service to Network headquarters in Glasgow. The project will be evaulated after eighteen months. Meanwhile, the nature of the project can best be seen in Angus District's description of their own links with it. 'By the end of 1985 each full time library will have specially designed information points which will help focus attention on what is available for adult education and at the same time incorporate many of the resources available from Network'. Within each information point attention is being focused on learning opportunities, consumer advice, local information, citizens advice bureau support, media and consumer provision, welfare rights and health and fitness.

Materials and Facilities

Providing back-up stock, both book and audio-visual, for particular courses such as those offered by the Open University, has long been a feature of public library work, and still produces the same complaints:

* 'Few lecturers assist us by supplying book lists in advance'.

* 'Enquiries about back-up facilities tend to come from people attending the course and not the teachers'.

* 'I have never found it easy to persuade "educators" to take account of bokstocks available locally when preparing courses'.

Perhaps more perceptively,

* 'I do feel that educators grasp the contribution that the library service can make to community education but I also get the feeling that they see libraries more as publicity outlets for their courses than as a means of supplying books and other materials which could help their students make more of a course of study'.

A number of authorities still provide boxes of books for extra mural classes or offer extended loan facilities, but the provision of educational materials is still seen very much as part of the total stock of the library. With the exception of adult basic education material, no library appears to designate a particular area or section 'adult education materials', presumably in the belief that most areas of the existing non-fiction provision are suitable, depending on the subject and level of the course. A number also stress the value of inter-lending schemes in supplementing the libraries' resources.

Yet, some authorities are beginning to question how appropriate this traditional style of provision is. Clackmannan says:

> Our stock does not really back up this educational demand adequately, but this is perhaps not entirely our fault.... Sometimes, but not always, local educators inform us that certain titles are going to be used on a course.... There is a tendency, however, to give us this information too late. It is also helpful to know how many local students are taking a particular course to determine the number of copies in stock.

North East Scotland Library Service feel that 'it is difficult to quantify the appropriateness of the library resources for this informal education'. This concern is also stressed by Cumbernauld and Kilsyth: 'It is difficult to assess how adequately, or inadequately, the needs of those pursuing further education courses are met from a library's stock holdings if contact is not established and continuously maintained with course organisers and/or students'.

Monklands make the point that, although library stocks may be adequate in the range of material covered, very rarely are they adequate in the provision of multiple copies for students; it takes time and money to upgrade subject areas of book stock. Renfrew are aware that 'students studying for courses in the fields of science and technology are more likely to face lengthy waiting periods for textbooks which tend to be more specialised and more expensive'.

In returns from authorities there are numerous references to the need for closer co-operation between librarians and the providers of courses but, with the exception of Shetland, Monklands and Renfrew, there are no references to the need for co-operation with other library services such as colleges of further education and schools, in the provision of support material. The potential for this kind of joint provision does not exist in many areas, but in some it does. Perhaps the separation of the public library and education

services following reorganisation of local government is an inhibiting factor.

Independent learners are increasingly making use of media other than books and, in the main, library services are responding to new demands. Aberdeen have an extensive collection of educational videos for loan ranging from a master class on the cello to fly fishing, as do authorities such as Falkirk and Motherwell. Aberdeen, Shetland and Renfrew provide facilities for the viewing of video cassettes. Motherwell makes available micro computers for loan, and the lending of computer software is spreading. Dundee offers a unique service through the Dundee Film Theatre, which is part of the central library complex and is administered by the libraries department. 'One day film seminars, weekend schools etc are organised in conjunction with the Scottish Film Council. Also, in co-operation with the Advisers in Tayside Region Education Departments, a regular season of films for schools are organised'.

For students tackling distance learning courses, libraries are of major assistance and several authorities provide information about their activities in this area. Orkney stock OU set books and back up reading, but only on specific courses requested by particular students. These students are, in turn, encouraged to donate to the library any relevant and surplus material they possess once their course is completed. Perth and Kinross have a separate stock of background reading for OU students; West Lothian has centred OU collections at Livingstone; and larger libraries in East Kilbride carry good stocks of OU texts and recommended background reading. Aberdeen, in addition to buying texts, provides a terminal for on-line access to the OU computer in Newcastle and a television and video cassette recorder for the use of OU students. The Mitchell Library, Glasgow, is a major student centre for the OU, providing course books and two OU computer terminals, a video recorder, screen and study rooms. Kyle and Carrick host an annual 'Open University Open Day', at which advisers and tutors are present to deal with any enquiry from the public and back up facilities such as a 'library tour' are also on offer.

Meeting Specific Needs

Although some library provision is of a general nature on a kind of blunderbus approach, an increasing number are attempting to target their services to the needs of specific groups. A major success has been in the field of adult basic education. There are many examples of positive progress. The District Librarian of Midlothian, for example, reports that 'we have built up an increasingly important link with the Adult Basic Education Service'. This includes the use of library premises by ABE groups; a talk by the ABE organiser, as part of the staff training programme, on the needs of adult learners; the supply of books and professional expertise to help ABE workers specialising in work with slow learners to set up a library service for their clients; and the development of collections of material for ABE students.

Dundee libraries have collections of basic reading for adult literacy in the Central library and other selected service points. There are links with the local Adult Basic Education Unit and regular visits to the library by staff of that unit. In Edinburgh there is a basic education collection in the City libraries selected from the Resource Review of the Scottish Adult Basic Education Unit. Main libraries in Renfrew also provide materials; Cumbernauld and Kilsyth have made available a catalogue of adult literacy material at the local community centre; while in Cumnock and Doon enquiries are directed to the local adviser.

The rise in adult and youth unemployment has led in many cases to increased

use of library facilities. Many services have responded to this in a very positive way. Renfrew and Dundee provide Job Centre Information Boards in all service points in order to:

> give details of the permanent facilities available from the Job Centre, such as job counselling, training procedures, disabled training etc. Its purpose is to give the name of the actual contact within the Job Centre and it is hoped that this will help publicise the educational and training roles of the Job Centre. In a similar vein we have regular visits ... from the participants in various YTS training schemes most notably one run by the Fine Fare organisation... which includes a course on how to study including how to use the facilities of the library. There is also a similar scheme run by the local Chamber of Commerce.

Renfrew provide collections for unemployed workers centres covering a variety of topics, including material on welfare rights. They also provide limited subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals. The Linwood Information Centre helps to train local staff at these centres in advice provision. Renfrew are also involved in courses organised by the WEA for STUC shop stewards. Library staff give talks on the range of material available from libraries and other sources and organise case studies to develop information handling skills for people taking the course. There is a special collection of material at library headquarters covering health and safety and trade union studies geared specifically to these courses.

Programmes directed towards retired people and those about to retire are mounted by a wide range of agencies from Health Boards to Community Education Services and the facilities offered by libraries are an integral part of many of these programmes. Other targets include housebound and disabled people; for example, Cumbernauld and Kilsyth supply books for craft projects run by an Adult Handicapped Group. Special provision for ethnic minorities, both in mother tongues and for the teaching of English as a second language, feature in a number of returns. Glasgow provides an excellent service in this area, and Kirkcaldy, in response to a demand from Fife Region, have built up a collection of material for the Vietnamese community.

Writers in residence schemes appear to be popular, with novelists, poets, playwrights working in a particular authority for a short period of time. Initially this activity seemed to be confined to readings and talks about literature, but increasingly they are being used to stimulate locally produced material, some of which libraries eventually publish.

Local studies material is an important area of provision. As Dunfermline points out, 'there has been a large expansion of interest in local studies, ancestry research and the country's heritage generally and local libraries are the principal (often the only) resource for this material'. Many authorities have tried, in recent years, to popularise at least part of their collection through the publication of books, photographs, guides etc. Local history workshops are very popular and are actively supported by librarians. The Western Isles experience is typical of many responses. 'Local history groups based on a village or group of villages ... spend a considerable amount of time in the Local History and Gaelic reference room consulting books, maps, microfilmed records etc. These local history groups collect and collate information, photographs etc from within their community'.

In addition to books and audio visual material, many libraries provide meeting rooms for local groups and societies, and more would do so were it not for the

shortage of space. The reference and study facilities in libraries appear to be well used both by individuals and by groups. Services are willing, given the constraints of staffing and space, to make special provision if required. Glasgow, for example, 'lease our Conference suite for a course ... based on video tapes. After the course the tapes will be held for consultation by the students'.

Links between Library Services and Adult Education

A major point which the returns highlight is that, while all libraries provide some basic support both in terms of publicity and bookstock, the extent to which provision develops beyond that basic level then depends largely on the strength of the links between librarians and those involved in education provision at a local level. Where relationships are good, as in Falkirk, 'we regularly receive the minutes of the local adult education tutors meetings and, where necessary, send a representative .... Through this we achieve input and receive output'. East Lothian 'have good links with Community Education and will telephone them with enquiries we cannot answer ourselves'. In Renfrew, 'the library service has taken an active role in educational provision, particularly in conjunction with the WEA and Community Education', and this involvement has led to increased activity.

In 1983 the Chief Librarian of Perth and Kinross felt that 'local links were not as good as they might be principally because of lack of comunication'. However, during 1985 a joint meeting took place on Tayside between the community education service and the three District library services in order to promote closer working links. At this meeting it was decided to look at the production of study packages and distance learning material to complement that which is provided nationally and the co-operative use of each other's resources, premises, equipment, materials and staff expertise. In his 1985 response the Perth Chief referred to 'a greater awareness on both sides of our respective functions and opportunities.... Informal contacts had already been made... but I am sure that the more formal approaches ... will result in greater practical co-operation'. In Borders and Dumfries and Galloway, where the regional library service is linked to education, both services felt that this structure greatly facilitated links with community educators.

Following the 1983 survey there has been some involvement by members of HM Inspectorate at local level to try to encourage co-operation between District and Regional 'educators' and library services, particularly in three areas, Cunninghame, Angus and Stirling. In Cunninghame a Community Resource Advisory Group had been established in 1981 drawing together, among others, librarians and comunity educators. The group had a few meetings and then ceased to function. The Inspectorate hoped to encourage both the re-establishment of this group and to explore other areas of co-operation. It was decided to concentrate initially on activities in the three towns of Stevenson, Saltcoats and Ardrossan and, although 'lack of staff time remains a major constraint... some progress is being made'.

One of the areas explored in Cunninghame was the way in which an initial enquiry could be used as a springboard for further developments. For example, an enquiry about the supply of books for a playgroup might lead to such developments as:

a) guidance to others about adult learning courses
b) advice on setting up self help groups
c) information about one-parent family groups

d) encouragement to groups to visit the library for story hours
e) advice on creches, nursery schools and other facilities for the under fives.

There is clear evidence that local links take time to build up and are paralleled by an increased awareness on both sides of the possible areas of co-operation. 'Increasingly, "educators" are realising the valuable contribution the library service can afford to their work and we are being asked to join adult/community education ventures as professional equals. We ourselves are now becoming pro-active rather than reactive in these matters'.

National Developments

The importance of strong local links has been emphasised but there is also a role for national organisations to initiate and encourage progress and to act as a forum for discussion on wider issues. The Scottish Library Association has established, over the last five years, formal contacts with agencies directly involved in the field of adult education. A Library Education Group, consisting of the Scottish Library Association, the Scottish Institute of Adult Education, the Scottish Community Education Council, Network Scotland Limited and an HMI, meets anbout twice a year to look at new developments, encourage co-operation and to exchange views on a variety of topics from training to new technology. In 1983 this group organised a seminar for Chief Librarians and Principal Community Education Officers to look at possible areas of co-operation. This meeting stimulated new local initiatives, and, at a more basic level, 'it gave me the chance to meet my lcoal community education officer. We both agreed that we should have a lot more contact'.

Liaison between the SLA and the broadcasting services has increased local involvement in adult education, particularly in the field of local history. Edinburgh, commenting on the links with the BBC and STV, state that 'three workshops were held in the City Libraries during the "History on your Doorstep" series, which were attended by 150 people and two workshops have been planned to co-incide with "A Sense of the Past" (Yorkshire Televison)'. The material issued for further study by both these series was compiled by librarians.

The Council for Educational Technmology Open Learning Unit has an interesting link with the library service in the Western Isles. The Unit is currently sponsoring the setting up of a Learning Links Centre for a trial period in the public library in Stornoway. A steering group is collecting information about adult learning and community activities, which will be put on disk by CET. The resulting data will be made available at the local public library. The SLA and CET are planning a joint seminar for Chief Librarians on 'Public Libraries and Adult Independent Learners' in November, 1985 to look at practical issues relating to policy and development.

Conclusion

The extent and nature of the response to the Inspectorate surveys indicate that libraries still regard support for education as an important element of their service. There also appears to be a desire to respond to the needs of adult and community education, although there are undoubted constraints on both staff and material funds. Provision of services in many rural areas poses particular problems. 'One difficulty we continually face is in getting books to readers as quickly, because of the distances involved.... In some of our

more rural areas covered by the mobile library and on some of the islands where we still operate volunteer library centres, it may well be that people either cannot use the library service or would find it unable to cater for their needs quickly enough'.

Some librarians, however, feel that they are too passive. 'We are conscious of the need to develop within our staff a recognition of the problems of adult learners'. It may be that:

> Libraries do not publicise their services often enough or with sufficient conviction to attract the notice of others in the 'community education' field. Even where no specific provision has been made, a good public library stock should provide a more than adequate back up for a wide range of educational activity but this has to be brought forcibly to the attention of the 'educators' rather than expect them to make the first move.

While there is perhaps some justification for this breastbeating on the part of libraries, there is also surely a responsibility on community educators to establish links and initiate dialogues. There is undoubtedly a need, on both sides, to grasp what the other is doing or is capable of doing. For libraries this may mean identifying particular groups or targets in their local community, rather than serving 'the general reader' and seizing the opportunities provided by the growth of open and distance learning. For the educators it means the realisation of the considerable support which libraries give to both formal and informal learning.

Certainly for both it should mean a willingness to talk and to explore ways of co-operation and progress.

> In general, the library service is known to exist, is acknowledged to have a role in local or community education and this involvement is increasing.... Libraries are often the only local authority present in an area (the citizens do not easily differentiate between a Regional or District Council facility) and if there are lights in the darkness, then they are library lights.

Robert Craig is Executive Secretary, Scottish Library Association

ADULT EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES: A PARTNERSHIP?

Anthony Cooke

The key role that public libraries can play in education in general and adult education in particular has long been acknowledged. The 1919 Report saw the public libraries as 'the natural successor of the mechanics institutes and similar reading and mutual improvement associations', and stressed the importance of libraries providing not only room for private study but also accommodation for classes, lectures and discussions. The Report contrasted the atmosphere of schools with their strong undertones of discipline and restraint with a somewhat idealised portrait of public libraries, which were characterised as fostering 'self-development in an atmosphere of freedom', and therefore were much closer to the ideals of the adult education movement. Nearer our own time, the Alexander Report (1975) recommended that public libraries should appoint members of staff to liaise with those concerned with adult education in their area in order to use the services of the library to the full.

Public libraries can provide a considerable range of services for adult education, both for the more formalised sector and for the independent adult learner, who is the focus of a growing amount of attention. Most obviously, public libraries can offer resources for learning in the form of books, manuscripts, records, videos and other materials. This function is perhaps particularly important in areas of high unemployment or low wages, where the cost of buying books may deter people from enrolling for a course or following a particular interest.

Secondly, public libraries can provide advice, guidance and counselling for learners and tutors alike, either by advising on booklists or choice of reading or by advising on learning opportunities available in the local area or further afield. The sheer range of information held by libraries in this field is often quite bewildering, from lists of voluntary organisations to information about careers. Public libraries act as a valuable reference point for adult education publicity, the more so as the public sees them in a neutral role when it comes to the claims of conflicting courses by different institutions.

Finally, libraries may provide premises for adult education classes and private study facilities for the individual learner. This role is particularly valuable as many modern educational facilities are sited on greenfield sites on the fringe of towns or in peripheral housing estates or suburbs in cities. Libraries tend to be centrally situated and easily reached by public transport from all parts of a town or city. They may also have incidental educational spinoff not readily available to the average school or community centre: in Arbroath library, which doubles up as the local art gallery, an adult education class may find itself sharing a room with two splendid paintings from the School of Breughel!

Recently, attention has focused on the role that public libraries can play in information, advisory and counselling services for adult education. This role seems to have been more fully developed in the United States, where libraries have come together to form the U.S. Learners' Advisory Service, which sets out to find out firstly what the learner wants to know and secondly to work out a plan to achieve that goal. American librarians involved in the scheme received training in programme planning and evaluation, understanding the adult

learner, interviewing and needs diagnosis, and guiding the learner in the use of study material. The scheme was based on a four-stage learning progression - access, planning, coping and evaluation. It assumed that the library service would not only provide information about existing educational services but would also act as a service for those whose learning needs could not be met by existing means.

Nothing so elaborate has evolved in the public library service in this country. Linda Butler, in a survey of educational advisory services (undated), noted that independently made library initiatives in the development of educational information were very few. She stressed the neutrality of libraries, their accessibility, their access to new technology and skills in information handling, and argued strongly for the emergence of public libraries as broad-based information points involved in a 'centre-network' model of educational information and guidance. Links to Learning (1979) drew attention to the unco-ordinated nature of educational guidance for adults in the UK: 'Distinctions must be drawn between information, assessment, advice, counselling, sponsorship, advocacy and feedback. At present, too many agencies attempt to provide some or all of these functions in a haphazard and unco-ordinated way.'

There are, of course, considerable obstacles to be overcome before public libraries in this country can play this wider role to the full. Constraints are imposed on libraries by staffing and finance which make it difficult for them to allocate or train adequate numbers of staff for an educational guidance or counselling role. Some commentators see the main obstacle lying rather in the training and attitudes of librarians, which focus on 'the traditional care of the printed works and on ways of making the collections both adequate and easily accessible to the public' (Legge, 1982). Any service based on libraries must also take account of the fact that, although about one-third of the population are members of public libraries, another third never read books at all (ibid). There are also the problems faced by the distribution and limited hours of opening of libraries in rural areas.

Within Scotland there have been some encouraging developments in recent years. One such development has been the growth of standing liaison panels between the Scottish Library Association and BBC Scotland, STV and Channel Four. Another has been the establishment of links amongst the Scottish Institute of Adult Education, the Scottish Library Association, the Scottish Community Education Council, and Network Scotland Limited. Amongst many local initiatives, Network have recently established an information and advisory point in Arbroath library and we are monitoring the results. One characteristic snag, reflecting perhaps the curatorial and custodial role in librarians' training, was that the information point was initially housed in the library's reference section rather than in the public lending section where the bulk of readers go.

My own experience of public libraries as an adult education tutor has been in both urban and rural areas. In an urban area such as Dundee with a relatively well funded library service there are few problems. Opening hours are long enough for libraries to be used by classes and individuals in the evenings and at weekends and there are specialised staff and facilities for events such as local history study. In rural areas, the situation can be very different. There are problems of time and expense involved in travelling to libraries, compounded by the fact that libraries in the small towns serving rural areas often have much more restricted opening times than those in urban areas.

There are particular problems involved in the study of local history. Many

libraries now hold considerable collections of local history books and archives and some have appointed archivists or specialist local history staff. Many records are still centralised in Edinburgh, however, in the National Library of Scotland or the Scottish Record Office. This can present considerable problems for adult classes when most members are working during the daytime. Xeroxing documents is perhaps only a part solution and the true answer may lie in producing microfilm copies of records to be held in local libraries although this presents fearsome problems of cost.

Public libraries in Scotland offer a service which is ignored by adult educators at their peril. The printed word has not withered away with the advent of television, video recorders and the home computer; on the contrary, the volume of books produced continues to expand. One problem that all libraries face is the growing cost of books, which continues to outstrip the rate of inflation and to outstrip the increase in library grants. The financial pressures imposed by this trend are likely to inhibit efforts by public libraries to move more purposefully into the area of counselling and advice for the adult learner.

One solution might be to have 'education weeks' where staff from universities, further education colleges, community centres etc join forces with library staff in the central location of the library to be 'on tap' with information and advice about adult education opportunities. Another might be for videos on career training and educational opportunities to be generally available in libraries.

These approaches require both public libraries and adult education to go out and 'sell themselves'. Both have been unduly modest perhaps about what they have to offer and have paid the penalty in terms of low public profile and financial cutbacks. Both could benefit from a closer partnership and from a campaign to project a more positive image of the real benefits they can offer.

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Anthony Cooke is Acting Head, Centre for Continuing Education, University of Dundee

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES

Pablo Foster

Librarians, where they have heard of adult basic education (ABE), may associate it with reading, writing and spelling only. This is understandable, since ABE in Britain has grown out of the adult literacy campaign of the 1970s. Few will be aware of the range and aims of ABE as an international movement.

ABE has three concerns: to equip people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to

* communicate effectively
* improve their quality of life
* contribute to society.

Ideally, it is about personal and community empowerment, through co-operation and the sharing of skills and knowledge. In practical terms, it is about an informal process for helping people acquire the skills which give them more control over their lives and open up more choices.

ABE workers are currently constrained to reach and help those adults who are up against severe barriers to personal or community development, whether those barriers are physical, mental, social or political. For a fuller participation in all aspects of our society people need access to information and they need to know how to use that information to generate knowledge and action. Since one of the roles of librarians is to garner and distribute information, ABE workers have more than a passing interest in libraries. The ABE workers themselves may experience library services as familiar and accessible; ABE students may not.

Workers in adult basic education also make certain assumptions about the library services which may or may not be true. Firstly, they assume that librarians are concerned with distributive justice when it comes to public access to and use of their expertise and resources. That is, they believe that librarians want to reach, involve and serve those people who are not traditional or even sporadic users. Secondly, they believe that librarians feel some responsibiliity for helping people acquire those skills and attitudes the very use of libraries presumes: reading, writing and confidence.

Perhaps over fifty per cent of the adult population derive little benefit from existing education or libraries. These 'Heineken' folk, the ones not reached by present services, remain a challenge to both ABE and the library services. The people who derive least benefit from current 'provision' cannot be dismissed as sub-literate or ignored because they do not respond to conventional styles and practice. They are rate-payers and voters like the rest of us, and in times when resources must be actively pursued, it is worth remembering how important it is to enlarge the circle of people who can speak on our behalf and vouch for the value of our work. However, their role is not merely serving our utilitarian purposes: they have overt and latent needs which libraries are best placed and funded to meet. We are one of their public resources.

ABE has learned a great deal about working with people who are not

conventional users of public services, and ABE workers can hazard a few common characteristics. Often they simply lack the confidence to approach representatives, officials or public servants. This shyness may derive from previous unsatisfactory experiences, a lack of essential adult skills (whether in terms of communication, literacy or self-management) or simply through self-disqualification - 'That's no for the likes o' me.' Others, when they do have the confidence, may lack the awareness of what the service can actually offer them. Further, when they learn what the service proffers, some may decide it holds nothing relevant to their interests, their needs or the important issues in their lives.

To summarise: many of the 'Heineken people' will reject themselves; most will be unaware of what libraries can offer; and others may know but reject libraries as irrelevant to their needs. These factors lie at the heart of the challenge to the library services.

If we can assume that librarians are genuinely interested in reaching the people not currently reached, that librarians feel some responsibility for helping people acquire essential adult skills, and that they are now interested in new roles, new strategies, new training and policy priorities, then adult basic education workers and librarians have a basis for fruitful co-operation.

Perhaps at this point we should re-affirm the importance of libraries. Key areas of life which are dependent upon a responsive library service are information, education, training, leisure, travel, employment, community 'health' (encouraging involvement, exchange of services, mutuality, informed use of power and representation, local development etc) and cultural continuity. We all need recurring access to and a participation in the resource creation and networking that libraries foster. Perhaps libraries do not sufficiently recognise their dynamic , as opposed to their custodial potential. Their crucial democratic service of maintaining evidence of alternative versions of the truth must continue, but their potential for promoting personal and community development should be exploited more confidently.

In addition, we could summarise some of the strengths of the library service - as seen by ABE workers: its institutional stability, its high street sites, its paid (!) trained staff who collectively represent enormous resources of knowledge and expertise (by contrast, ABE has few full-timers, operates wherever donors allocate space and in Scotland is largely dependent upon 4000 volunteers). How can libraries extend these resources outward into the community, to reach those not previously reached or not currently served?

First, let us look at the barriers which libraries present to full participation by all sectors of the community. There are the obvious physical barriers (for those people coping with disablement), admittedly more evident in the older premises than in the new. There are still mental barriers, too, the old stereotypes of silence and formality conspiring to intimidate the shy, the insecure, or people disadvantaged by language or by channels of communication. There are also stylistic barriers: the habits of centre-based staff who expect others to do the approaching, to initiate any exchanges, to fathom out procedures. The latter barriers are often amplified by the dominant medium used by libraries - print. The spoken word can be so much more welcoming and accessible. Although libraries have long ceased modelling themselves on temples, they still have a long way to go before they seem as welcoming as bingo halls to the kind of people who remain largely potential clients only.

The strategies for tackling these barriers are being explored by the Community Services Group within the Scottish Library Association, and by libraries in places like Ferguslie Park, Paisley or Ardrossan. Their discoveries should be adopted by all libraries, however: improve access, improve your welcome, provide support services (such as a creche or coffee bar), and then negotiate services as people gain the confidence to express their needs.

To the people 'out there' these barriers are very real. Many ABE workers prepare students for their first approach to libraries, and some librarians prepare to receive them. This kind of collaboration could be more actively encouraged. Together librarians and ABE workers could find out from new users how best to effect introductions. Joint training materials already exist in pilot form.

Next, examine your stock . Does it really cater for new adult clients, or are you expecting the new ones to adapt to your present range? Do you have materials which cater for neo-literate adults, whether in the Write First Time category, or even books with a high pictures-to-text ratio? Do you have large print books like the new Magna-SLA series, publishing authentic Scots materials? Do you have local community information on display and available?

Then, participate with new clients in experimenting with your systems. Do you have easily accessible samples, such as photo-copied pages of books, so that print size, format, extent of supporting graphics and pictures are more immediately obvious? Do you have adult materials of the 'talking book' variety identified as specifically for adults and particularly for parents who want to (learn to?) read to their children?

Next, examine your processes and strategies for reaching out to new clients. Do you have staff who tour local ABE and adult education groups, talking about your library and asking what kinds of information or educational or leisure materials they might like? Do you have any process by which you negotiate with the surrounding community what they see as useful services and resources? Can you offer facilities on the premises for ABE tutors and their students? Are any of your staff interested in learning how adults learn how to read, or in becoming tutors? Do you have open days or evenings for local community groups, when they can come in (each within the security of a group) and find out what you really offer? Do you also do outreach promotional work among groups using community centres, schools, voluntary agencies or church halls? In addition to mobile libraries, why not peripatetic librarians, making use of other people's premises to run information surgeries for example? People learn more when they are on familiar ground and do not feel threatened.

Finally, examine the range of your services and decide whether they are best calculated to attract new clients. Some of you will have embarked upon the process of becoming a community library by supporting community empowerment, moving up through the gears of information to advice, guidance, advocacy - even responsiveness. You will perhaps already be providing ephemeral, local information and an informal guidance service. Some may even be providing creche facilities. However, if you are already committed to this process, why not amplify the use of your drop-in facilities by sponsoring personal tutoring (delivered by ABE workers), self-directed learning, resource-scanning, information exchanges etc. In short, take a more overtly educational role, in collaboration with local educators. With a growing trend in open learning, libraries could market learning packages, bibliographies, even educational counselling. With developments in new technology creating new barriers to access, libraries could play an important role in making equipment, software, and learning opportunities available to those who cannot afford such things.

Of course, to reach those people ABE is also concerned to reach, the educational partnership may have to focus on essential literacy and access skills, and on programmes like 'Getting the most out of books/ your library/ new services' etc. Libraries could target on particular anxieties, like 'Reading aloud to young children' or 'Letters to officials' or 'Understanding homework' or 'Returning to study', and offer these in collaboration with ABE or adult education workers. Unless you experiment with new offerings, you may not attract new clients, and an informal style and practical relevance will be more encouraging than 'posh presentations' and 'academic language'.

It will be a long haul to persuade those people who cannot see the relevance and value of libraries to come out and use them, partly because it will take librarians themselves time to learn what they can genuinely offer. It will be easier to reach those people already comfortably involved with other agencies, providing libraries are prepared to initiate outreach work and then provide the drop-in facilities when the clients return the compliment. Yet, both challenges presume additional resources, new training and attitudes committed to responding to people who are not traditional beneficiaries. Some of the resources, paradoxically, will probably come when the clientele has been enlarged. Others will be found through collaborative ventures with educational agencies. Help with training in how to work with adults, for example, could come from local ABE schemes or through the Scottish Adult Basic Education Unit. Help with the generation of new resources could come from a wide spectrum of local and national agencies.

If there are readers who feel intimidated by the challenge to go forth and reach all those people not currently benefiting from library services, then select target groups from among the following:

* the isolated - those who are home-bound, institutionalised or prevented by disability from reaching your library
* the unemployed - that is, all those who cannot get paid employment
* parents with young children who lack confidence in their own educational skills
* elderly people who would derive great pleasure from reading
* neo-literate adults generally.

Start with any one group, and you will develop skills, resources and strategies which will give you the confidence to reach the rest.

The way forward is through partnerships. Librarians and ABE workers together can tackle some of the barriers to greater use of library services: they can generate joint training materials, joint stock and participate in helping formulate new policy. As demand grows, resources will follow, not necessarily as cash, but as support, gift work and materials. Since there is nothing so practical as a clear policy, perhaps we should begin with a joint commitment to reach those people who are not current beneficiaries. That should keep us occupied for a while....

Pablo Foster is Director of the Scottish Adult Basic Education Unit

LIBRARY SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT LEARNERS

Vernon Smith

> There are many adults in all walks of life who have acquired the capacity to maintain the process of self-education through reading and discussion, through selective viewing and listening, through travel and by many other means, without the need to participate in any organised educational programme (the Alexander Report, 1975).
>
> The major planner of adult learning ... is the learner himself (sic). Self-planned and self-initiated learning accounts for approximately two-thirds of the total learning efforts of adults (OECD, 1979).

At least in theory, the local public library is a major learning resource centre for its community. Linked as it is to a regional and national interlending system, it offers to the average citizen access to a vast range of documents, books and other materials. In practice few people make use of the full potential of their library - and some make no use at all.

In years gone by the independent adult learner was the mainstay of the public library, and the library was the mainstay of the independent learner. Since those golden days, however, learners have discovered 'education' (elementary, then secondary, further, higher and continuing), whilst librarians have discovered 'recreation', the age of leisure and the vital importance of 'information'. We therefore now have a dual problem. The average person no longer thinks of the library as 'the People's University' and, indeed, is probably unaware of many of the services which it provides. And the average library rarely goes out of its way to promote or advertise the services which it could offer to independent learners.

During most of this century the common assumption has been that most organised learning takes place in training centres and colleges, or in adult education and community centres - though publishers and broadcasters have always known that this was not so. The last two decades, in contrast, have seen significant developments in learner-centred education - via distance and open learning; growing emphasis given to community-based learning; and a substantial number of learning activities promoted under the auspices of the new popular movements and of local action groups. A process of re-orientation in the education system itself is also under way; and the development of citizens capable of engaging in self-directed learning - and motivated to do so on a lifelong basis - has now emerged as a major aim.

The needs of the self-directed or independent learner being once more back in fashion, the challenge to the public library system would appear to be two-fold. On the one hand there is the question of whether its staff and services will be able to respond to the demands of experienced learners and to those of the new generation of young adults recently equipped, through schools and colleges, with learning and information skills. On the other hand, it is necessary to ask how far public libraries will be able to provide encouragement and assistance to less experienced learners, and to the large numbers of adults who previously left school at the minimum age, with inadequate information skills and with no certificates or qualifications of any sort. For one consequence of the contemporary information explosion must inevitably be a further widening in the already large gap between the 'information rich' and the 'information poor' - in the absence of concerted

counteractive effort.

Independent Learners

In seeking to promote services for independent adult learners librarians may not always find it easy for identify exactly what they are expected to provide, and for whom. Many libraries already provide back-up services for adult learners, at the request of other agencies - colleges and universities, the Workers Educational Association, the Open University, adult literacy and basic education schemes, community education centres and the like. And we have also seen a growing interest in adult education information and guidance services, for people wishing to take advantage of the wide variety of education and training opportunities now available.

Generally speaking, however, these are services for enrolled learners or would-be learners. Here there may sometimes be a danger that persistent pressures from the education system on behalf of its existing and potential clients may cause libraries to pay less attention to the needs of the many individuals and groups who might more usefully pursue their learning independently.

The experience of librarians and the findings of researchers such as Tough (1971) and Brookfield (1981a and b) suggest that independent learning is a ubiquitous activity. Indeed, many librarians would claim that all their 'serious readers' were independent learners. Motives for wishing to learn vary considerably, of course. Some people engaged in learning are pursuing hobbies; some are trying to cope with DIY projects; some are concerned with community or civic issues; some wish to acquire job-related knowledge or skills; some are seeking to improve their general education or to obtain qualifications; some are simply following personal interests.

The Council for Educational Technology action research project on public libraries and adult independent learners used the following definition in its consultative paper circulated to heads of United Kingdom public library services in 1985: ' Adult independent learners are any members of the public who engage in specific learning activities on a regular or occasional basis - either as individuals or in groups - without formally enrolling for a course with an education or training agency.'

There are hopes that one of the main outcomes of the project, which is funded by the British Library between 1984 and 1986, will be to focus greater attention on the promotion of independent learning as a prime purpose of the public library system . It could be argued that such an end is more likely to be achieved in the long run if library services and library staff in general can be oriented to foster the habits and skills of learning in all library users. On the other hand, it has to be recognised that in some circumstances librarians may prefer to identify 'independent learners' as one more special client group requiring special services of a particular kind. Whatever the approach adopted, perhaps the most important prerequisite is an understanding of the needs of adults seeking to engage in learning on an independent basis.

Learner Needs

If independent learners were all self-reliant and self-sufficient learners, they would have no need of any public library services. They would have their own books and learning resources, their own sources of information, and would

possess all the necessary skills for effective learning. But many adults may be lacking some or all of these, yet still wish to engage in independent learning. The most common needs of such learners can be classified under the following three headings:

Information
- about books, periodicals, self-instructional packages
- about broadcasts, audio-visual and multi-media materials
- about local people willing to help independent learners
- about local and other organisations offering facilities or assistance to novices or more experienced learners

Learning Materials and Facilities
- books and other print materials
- audio-visual materials such as audio cassettes, video cassettes, computer software
- equipment and services such as cassette players, computers, typewriters, photocopying
- study or meeting facilities

Learner Support Services
- assistance with planning learning activities
- training in effective use of library materials, including assistance with reading and study skills
- help with selecting suitable materials, at the right level
- help with keeping records of progress
- opportunities for consultation, general encouragement and advice.

Most librarians would feel relatively happy about meeting the information and materials needs referred to above, and could hope to do so without getting involved in too much additional work, although not all staff responsible for stock selection may yet be fully aware of the wide range of open learning and self-instructional materials now becoming available. When it comes to the provision of learning support services, however, things are far more complex.

New Demands on Library Services

Generally speaking, the modern library operates on a self-help basis, and assumes that most users will be able to satisfy their own needs - more or less successfully - by making use of the information, bibliographic tools and stocks of materials available. Library information and guidance can provide further help for the purposive user; and an enquiry service or readers' advisory service may be available as a back-up for users who feel that they need assistance from staff.

If a library service is concerned to go as far as possible towards meeting the needs for learning support referred to above, it may be necessary to provide considerable reinforcement for the normal self-help service, and to look at further implications for:

- the amount of staff time required for dealing with enquiries;
- the degree of professional and specialist expertise required for advising learners on books, materials and the organisatiaon of their learning;
- user induction and user training arrangements;
- increased use of library inter-lending systems;
- negotiation of referral arrangements and other collaborative schemes with other agencies;

- staff development and staff training arrangements.

To some extent, demands on staff time might be minimised by the provision of appropriate print information, graded and annotated booklists, learner guides and other kinds of user induction and user education materials specifically devised to help inexperienced learners.

However, a number of those engaged in learning will inevitably require opportunities for discussion with suitably trained staff who can help them cope with the planning and execution of their learning activities. Here we shall undoubtedly find a diversity of opinion amongst librarians. In large libraries at least, there may be those who might hope to provide a full range of support services for learners. There are others who point to the lack of subject specialist staff in most libraries and insist that the provision of learning support services must be the responsibility of educators or the local college library. There are also others who would like to provide as much assistance as possible from their admittedly generalist staff, but recognise that tutorial help and specialist advice can only be provided by referral to other agencies.

What is obviously important is to ensure that people engaged in independent learning do not fall between two stools. There is certainly a danger in some cases that, whilst the public library is assuming that independent learners can obtain specialist advice and support through some branch of the education service, local educational providers will deny that they have any responsibility for learners other than those attached to their own organisation. Certainly the development of open learning schemes in colleges and in adult and community education has helped to liberalise attitudes in the education sector, and has given some experience of organising learner-centred tutorial services. However, in many places there is still considerable scope for increased collaboration between public libraries and educational services in providing support for independent learning.

Perhaps some joint consideration of relevant issues by a mixed group of public librarians and education librarians might help to identify desirable developments for recommendation to their respective services? Unfortunately, however, one of the consequences of financial cuts, which have affected both bookstocks and staffing, has been an increased wariness on the part of librarians in both sectors towards any suggestions for co-operation which might lead to increasing demands being made on already depleted resources.

Learning in community groups

Much of what has been said so far may appear more relevant to individuals learning independently than to groups . Yet many local groups in the community, which may have no connection at all with the education and training system, involve their members in a wide variety of training, educational and learning activities. Traditionally the Co-operative movement, the trades unions, the churches, local clubs and societies, and many different women's organisations have included education amongst their aims. Since the post-war period we have also witnessed the rise of a new wave of single-issue popular movements at national level, such as the peace movement, the women's movement, the conservationist and environmentalist movements. At local level, there has been a proliferation of action groups and interest groups concerned with specific local problems or with social and civic issues of many different kinds.

Such groups may contain many active learners and would-be learners, several of whom may require the use of learning resources from time to time. Some groups may have access to specialist networks and specialist resource centres. But many of those associated with groups of this kind would very likely pursue their learning via the public library, if they were persuaded that the public library system could effectively help to meet their needs. Liaison between libraries and the headquarters staff of appropriate organisations may help identify the most fruitful avenues of co-operation, perhaps including the compilation of a reader's guide or annotated resource list.

To some extent the development of community information and the 'community services' within the public library system already reflects a positive response to the needs of such groups. Indeed, in some instances there has been a move to locate library stock in local community venues. However, in the many cases where such a policy would result in undesirable depletion of stocks in main library premises, other approaches to the servicing of community groups are sometimes adopted. Amongst other methods these may include:

- setting up short-loan book-box arrangements
- organised visits to the library
- arrangement of special library induction sessions
- the offer of meeting facilities
- collaborative planning or library-based lecture programmes
- mounting of special exhibitions and displays
- public relations visits or book talks to local groups.

Above all, the public library needs to highlight its image as a major local learning resource centre.

Conclusions

Since broadcasters, publishers, educators, trainers and librarians all have an interest in the promotion of independent learning, it seems likely that significant developments in this field are more likely to come about through collaborative initiative than by isolated effort. If this is the case, it may be that within a United Kingdom context Scotland is more favourably placed than other parts to pursue such initiatives. In Network Scotland Limited, Scotland already has a consortium-based operation concerned with the promotion of community information and adult learning opportunities, through collaborative action amongst broadcasting, educational, training and library agencies. Meanwhile, in the education world there is already official commitment, at national and at local level, both to modularised open learning schemes and to the concept of neighbourhood community education. There are also the seeds of interesting developments in independent learning in Northern Ireland, Wales and various regions of England. Only time will tell which soil actually proves to be the most fertile.

If there were five things one would hope to see given serious attention by public libraries in the immediate period ahead, these might be:

- firstly, a re-affirmation that the promotion of independent learning is a prime purpose of the library service;

- secondly, a recognition that many adults, lacking either the skills or the motivation to make full use of current library services on a casual self-help basis, may require some degree of assistance in pursuing their learning

efforts;

- thirdly, the implementation of staff development programmes aimed at helping library personnel to foster the habits and skills of learning in all library users;

- fourthly, periodic review of stock selection arrangements to ensure that adequate information is available about, and adequate attention is paid to, new books and other materials particularly appropriate for independent learning;

- fifthly, the development of collaborative arrangements with educational and other agencies to improve information, materials provision and support services available to the learning public.

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Vernon Smith is Project Investigator, Project on Adult Independent Learning, Council for Educational Technology

OPEN LEARNING:THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Nigel Paine

This article looks at open learning and how this new form of provision alters radically the potential role of the public library vis a vis the learner. A relationship between the providers of education and the library service will create a new relationship between the learner and his or her local library. The library is there, covering the whole of Scotland, and as a unique resource it ought to be used to the full.

The traditional delivery of learning opportunities from institutions, allows only a very small role for the public library service. If learning takes place within the institution, then most of the process of learning is directly under that institution's control. It is possible that the learner may wish to use the library for private study or to locate a specific book, but most of these requirements will be met by the library in the providing institution. This library is often geared to the specialist needs of the learners in the institution and carries specialist textbooks and journals for the particular course of study. With the exception of the large reference library such as the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, hardly any direct use is made by the conventional learner of his or her local library.

For adult learners at varying levels of learning from adult basic education through to university extra-mural courses, the dependence on the library service is far more acute. In fact, the service goes back to the very origins of the contemporary library for the majority of the population.

Many of the points made in this article will have direct reference to others in this volume: we are all attempting to put the learning back into the library. This does not mean that the learning has ever disappeared, but that now the time is ripe for moving it back to centre stage.

What is open learning?

Open learning is a term used to describe learning opportunities that are designed to overcome barriers which exclude adults from learning opportunities. In other words, open learning opportunities are designed for adults to learn at the pace, in the place and at the time suitable for themselves rather than for a providing institution. Open learning is flexible provision of learning opportunities geared towards the needs of individuals and designed to cope with their specific commitments and lifestyle. In the Scottish Council for Educational Technology we publish every year a 'Directory of Open Learning Opportunities for People in Scotland.' The 1985 Directory lists over 420 courses which offer opportunities to well over 12,000 people. Open learning is a growing area; hundreds more courses will be added to the ones listed during the next two years. Open learning appears to be what adults want as a mode of study, and what they want in increasing numbers.

An Example of an Open Learning Course

Telford College has over 500 adults studying by Flexistudy in a range of subjects. They receive specially prepared units of material from the college which they can work on at home. Every few weeks they come into the college for

a tutorial or seminar where they sort out any problems concerning the course and meet with fellow students. On some courses practical assignments are organised in college as well. Computer courses allow students to work on college machines individually at a time to suit the learner as well as providing college-based tutorials.

By providing a Flexistudy programme, Telford has over 500 additional part-time students who would not have made use of the college had only conventional courses been on offer. Many of these students do not live (and do not need to live) within easy travelling distance of the college. Their relationship with the college is therefore unique. They have special problems that only they share, concerned with their relative isolation from fellow students and college facilities. This could well evoke a unique response from the public library service. They need to be taken into account: they are the new breed of independent adult learner.

The example quoted above is just one of a growing nunber of courses which extend adult learning opportunities. These can be organised by further education colleges, central institutions adult and community education, colleges of education or universities. They all look slightly different because each provider operates according to its resources and facilities. Listed below are a number of ways the library service can respond to this innovative area.

Ten Action Points for the Public Library

1. Information Whatever the course, public libraries have always been a rich source of information about learning opportunities. This stretches from long, formal courses to community based learning. The library is an information point for both national and local information. In a new area such as open learning, it is very important that the librarian knows what someone is talking about when he or she mentions phrases such as 'flexistudy' or 'open' courses. The next stage is to direct them to the relevant publications, and help them make the first contacts and enquiries. All libraries should know about open learning and carry at least one copy of the Open Learning Directory and the Open University guides to admission. Often, however, information is simply not enough. This leads onto my second point.

2. Guidance With the plethora of choice facing the open learning student who is often, by definition, at a distance from the providing institution, the choice of a suitable course becomes a nightmare. The public library service is not an educational guidance service, but a little help can push an uncertain, potential learner in the right direction. Often that can mean not more than a minute or two reading the information carefully with the potential student. If the information is too complex, a central information point such as Network Scotland Limited can provide answers. To pass an individual on to Network, however, requires the library to be familiar with the services it offers. When open learning becomes more wide-spread, libraries may well be able to offer distinctive displays which focus on, and attract the user to, educational information. If at all possible, one member of staff should have a specialist interest in that area. Point three logically follows.

3. On-line enrolment Even relatively small libraries will make more and more use of on-line information services linked by telephone into large computers. An instant service could exist for a student wishing either further details of a particular course or immediate enrolment. An electronic mail service could ensure that a course pack was despatched that same day, and

on-line enrolment could give instant information about the availaibility of places, course costs and other details.

If that description sounds fanciful, it might be worth mentioning that such a system is being proposed for the Network Open Tech Information Project. It will be in operation early in 1986 to enrol Scottish students on Scottish Open Tech sponsored courses.

4. Learning Package Library Open learning almost inevitably involves the production of learning packs which the learner will work through for a part, at least, of the learning sequence. To be able to view these and study them at leisure gives the prospective learner a first rate knowledge of the level of appropriateness of the course in question. As learning resources to help the totally independent adult learner, they can also be very useful. Libraries have at least some obligation to buy and allow for reference use selected self-study materials which are now available. These resources are packaged in a variety of media. This point therefore leads onto my next.

5. Provision of Resources Many open learning courses make computer software, video cassettes or audio tapes an integral part of the learning package. It would be possible for the open learning student to access those resources he or she needs at a library in order to learn in an integrated way from one media and then another. One advantage of this would be that packs and software bought in by the library would therefore be available for independent learning for those not enrolled on a formal course.

As more and more resources are becoming available as non-book resources, all libraries will have to get involved with this to a certain extent. Lending out software, in much the same way as libraries currently lend out books, could be a feature of the library of the future. Already many libraries are collecting educational video tapes for lending. It is only a small step away to getting involved in complete package provision.

6. Structured Learning and the Library With a stock of relevant packages, it would be a small step for the library to begin to offer a series of integrated courses managed exclusively by the library. It would obviously be pointless competing with the colleges and getting involved with subject areas beyond the competence of library staff. There are, however, key learning needs related to other open learning courses. A library could, for example, offer short study skills courses or courses which relate remedially to a range of others such as basic communications or mathematics. Some short courses such as 'report writing' could either stand alone or form an integral part of other provision. The familiarity of the library setting could also help people back into adult learning in areas where the traditional college might appear frightening. A library will be seen as more 'formal' than a community centre but less 'formal' than the college - a perfect bridge between the two.

7. Provision of Open Learning Accommodation Part of the philosophy of open learning concerns the taking of the learning to the learner. It might be convenient, for instance, to organise tutorials near the learner rather than in the institution. A quiet room or a section of a reference library available for such purposes is convenient and brings the learner into the library in the first place.

If the group subsequently decided to set up self-help learner groups where they will meet in the absence of a tutor to discuss problems and generally to share ideas, then the library will be the natural focus for that meeting. If it has useful resources, then those too can be incorporated into the self-help

programme. This can mean using course based material but also other material located by library staff.

8. Back-up Resources If a library service were interested in supporting open learning learners, or at least contributing to the support of learners, each course-providing institution could list relevant additional resources related to a particular course. The student could then be informed that these were available at the local library, thereby minimising the need to attend the college. This could operate in much the same way as an in-college library makes resource provision available for its conventional learners. Even if students were enrolled on a conventional distance learning course where the learners were scattered across the country, each relevant library could be contacted and asked to seek out resources for an individual or small group of learners. If books were sought via the inter-library loans scheme, this would cost very little to operate.

This formal library/college relationship could operate in addition to an informal relationship generated by the individual learner who would simply approach the library with an appropriate resource list. It parallels the 'bookbox' idea pioneered by the WEA in the 1920s. A particular adult course could retain a box of relevant books from their local library until the course finished.

9. Conference Call Centre It is relatively simple and inexpensive to link a group of students together with a tutor by telephone. This is known as a conference call. All the people linked in the conference call can speak to each other and hear what everybody has to say. There is obviously some advantage in a small group of learners speaking together in the same room to a remote tutor. This involves some kind of loud-speaker telephone. A library would be a convenient base for such a loud-speaker telephone. It could be hired to groups rather than lent free of charge and could therefore pay for itself, provided sufficient use were made of the facility at as fair a charging rate as possible.

10. Coherent Open Learning Development It has traditionally been difficult, in Scotland, to organise a proper and regular consultative and discussion forum between education, which is a Regional provision, and the library service, which is a District Council responsibility. Open learning is a possible way of bringing the two sides together. If the provision of open learning courses were taken district by district, the local library service could merge its provision in that area with the college. If both operations agreed to similar publicity then the main benefactor would be the learner. As provision would obviously differ radically from one district to another, and as the style of library provision also differs, the pattern would not be coherent all over Scotland. For the individual learner who wants to know what is available for him or her, this would be irrelevant. There would also be the advantage of certain models being set up in different parts of the country which could act as exemplars for others.

If a certain district had no provision in this area, then the library might take the lead and set up a resource bank of materials for individual independent learners. If such small scale open learning provision became popular, it would be difficult for the college to refuse to extend the opportunity. If the library also decided to work with the community education service offering the bridging courses discussed earlier, then the base for a true focus on community learning needs could be established.

Related Problems for the Library

If only a few of the ten suggestions were implemented then there would be considerable implications for both resources and staff roles in the library. It is clear from a number of the points above that there are implications for the role of the librarian. A glance at the ten points reveals that librarians will have to absorb something of these roles: resources consultant, manager of learning, audio visual expert, learning counsellor, information expert. Only the latter can be properly described as being wholly within the current remit. Many of these roles, however, touch upon current roles and could be seen as natural developments out of existing remits in the face of a changing world. If it is agreed that these roles are acceptable, then a programme of staff development must be instituted in order to move forward. People cannot be expected to shift tack without help and support.

But any development in the library service usually means a cut-back somewhere else in the service. Crudely, one video cassette recorder equals 80 books; learning resources mean fewer novels. It would be impossible to agree such a programme without the clear evidence that a need was there in the first place. This is not always easy as the existence of a service often stimulates a latent demand. Some geographical areas may well be more enthusiastic than others.

Conclusions

There is a very powerful role for the library of the future which takes it directly into the learning style of the contemporary world. For the first in a long time, a library could become a central rather than a peripheral resource.

None of the things suggested will materialise if the providers of the education service do not start talking to the providers of the library service. That is a first minimum requirement, and may well spill over into other areas of mutual concern. In the words of Robert Craig writing about the role of the libraries in the current Open Learning Directory, 'Public libraries are accessible, they are to be found in all the smallest communities and are a major source of educational material and information.' Learners and libraries were made for each other.

Notes

Network Scotland Limited is an organisation which provides educational advice and guidance as well as Scotland's broadcast referral service. They can be contacted on 041-357-1774 or at 74 Victoria Crescent Road, Glasgow G12 9JQ.

You can get all the information you require about Open Tech provision in Scotland by writing to Network or telephoning FREEPHONE NETWORK.

The Council for Educational Technology has a two year project underway to investigate how libraries can support the adult indepependent learner. I am grateful to the Project Officer, Vernon Smith, for discussions in this area.

Nigel Paine is Adviser in Education Technology (Open Learning), Scottish Council for Educational Technology

A LARGE NUMBER OF SMALL STEPS: BROADCASTING AND LIBRARIES

James Boyle

A man of some learning and mature years - a research scientist - once told me that he no longer read fiction. 'Storybooks' was the term he used, and used pejoratively, in rejecting all such material. Quite right too. The more facts we have the better. How much more rewarding to traffic only in verifiable truth by, for example, reading only newspapers.

Like everyone else in the service and retail sectors, broadcasters tend to believe that the customer is always right. I wonder how a library authority, if it too were bent on ignoring contemporary fiction, would deal with customers who ask for the book-of-the-television series whether it's The Thorn Birds or Bleak House . And the customers will ask for them again and again. Any front-line library assistant driving the issues desk will recognise the direct relationship between media coverage and customer requests.

Performance under pressure, coping with rush hours and multiple requests for a single heavy volume, is the point at which customers judge the library's worth and willingness to serve them adequately. What conclusion would you draw if you were told, as a new member, that the novel you have seen on telly is not available because it is up to you to supply your own story-books? Fiction, by far, constitutes the major part of the issues made by public libraries. Writers will not stop writing; publishers will not stop publishing and broadcasters will continue to broadcast.

Broadcasting has, over the years, played a large part in determining the pattern of issues. The boom in publication and borrowing of natural history books owes a very great deal to a succession of television stars from Armand and Michaela to Sir David Attenborough. Dickens is rediscovered with each television foray into his work. Libraries have acquiesced in this state of affairs, accommodating the demands of the public induced by the broadcasts. 'Television-linked' is a magic phrase for publishers and a warning to librarians of things to come.

What is clear is that librarians have not had - or have chosen not to have - much say in these machinations. For example, no television producer would adapt a novel or play for broadcast without flogging the event to the Publisher's Association through well-established channels of communication. The succeeding question is not, 'Who tells libraries?' but 'Why haven't libraries asked?' To my knowledge, no effort has ever been made to ensure that library authorities or the professional bodies receive parity of treatment with the Publisher's Association in the matter of advance information. A thousand informal adult education courses on modern literature might be better serviced and better attended if that one channel of communication were opened.

All this is to say that libraries do not go unaffected by broadcasting and, that being the case, it is in everyone's interest to look at the effects and to find ways of making them less random than at present. No one doubts - in theory anyway - that there is a constituency of interest common to librarians and adult educators, although the exploitation of this interest is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Certainly, in these ten years since the literacy project, the mutuality of interests between educators and broadcasters is both established and institutionalised on this committee and that council. But only the very persistent continue the campaign to bring

closer ties between libraries and broadcasting. The failure to close the gulf or - to use a more optimistic metaphor - to cement the bonds is serious, significant, and should be high on the agenda of all three parties - educators, librarians, and broadcasters. It matters. Unlike a number of the great cosmic intractables, there is every prospect of change within a short time if we think it important to act now ....

Not long ago, I was present when the Principal of a library school in a northern city gave an address to a gathering of assistant librarians. During the talk he quoted from a survey of library users who were asked to describe the characteristics of librarians. The resultant pen portraits were crude and cliched. A male librarian, apparently, is one whose interests lie in the arts and whose personality is decidedly unassertive. To my surprise, no one in the audience demurred; they sat unassertively accepting the stereotype. All such exercises are, of course, grotesque and should be ignored. And yet, and yet... those present took it on the chin. Perhaps there never was a survey but the response to the description was real enough. But if it shows anything it shows a profoundly low level of morale rather than any significant congregation of maladjustment.

Perhaps any gloss on this story is intrusive but from the broadcaster's point of view the librarians' morale is a function of their not having a good conceit of themselves. And that in turn is implicit in a service-type industry where there are endless demands to be met with quiet efficiency but without tangible product. It is also a fact that the federalism of library services creates interesting local variants but for national agencies such as broadcasting provides difficulties in liaison. From the customer viewpoint the new logo is a great idea, bringing as it does a national presence and style in the operation of libraries. Policy is a different matter. Libraries do not have the advantages or impediments of a major government ministry making constant policy directives. There tend to be, therefore, collections of authorities operating with varying degrees of vigour but, inevitably, there is no nationally enforced consensus on either purpose or priorities. That is a real problem for broadcasters trying to effect unity of action or commitment to some nationwide educational venture.

Librarians, especially those at the sharp end, will hardly be surprised by joy when another radio station or television channel arrives with a great message for the public - to be distributed by libraries. There's the rub. There is not one national broadcasting agency for libraries to wrestle to the ground but a number of broadcasting channels, stations and departments all operating at national or supra-regional level - and usually with no knowledge of one another's activities. It is probably very like having a herd of over-affectionate elephants visiting your market garden.

There is a famous story about elephants and broadcasters. Those who know say that forming a relationship with broadcasters is like mating with an elephant: there is a great deal of manoevring; there is a very long gestation period before anything happens; and there is a constant danger of being crushed to annihilation by the weight of your consort. So, yes, broadcasters can be unlovely and, in the great scheme of things, it is the librarians who are tied to the house while the media people opt in and out of the premises.

Despite these frustrations and those engendered by the constant cheeseparing wished on the services from without, librarians should be encouraged by their successes and their established place in the community - a status denied to broadcasters who are, forever, intruders. When the politicians, by turns, ignore and decimate library services, it should be remembered that no one

loves libraries except the public. Those of us who are customers are quite fanatically zealous about libraries.

Educational broadcasters are also under seige, as a cursory glance at the television schedules will demonstrate. Entertainment is wall to wall on three of the four channels and structured, factual programmes are widely discounted. How ironic that some libraries disregard fiction and some broadcasters disregard factual material and all in the interests of the greater economic good rather than public service.

For the time being we all - librarians, broadcasters and educators - should adopt the policy which the American statesman Cyrus Vance propounded as the real method of diplomacy, an accretion of a great number of very small steps.

The immediate good news for those who wish to make alliances with libraries is that the professional body in Scotland, the Scottish Library Association, is providing the sort of leadership which makes it easy for colleagues to 'think library'. It is shameful that the many broadcasting committees, councils and advisory groups have so few librarians in membership. The school library service, as a crucial resource providers, really should find a place with the teaching profession in the councils which govern educational broadcasting.

The SLA deserves to be supported in its ambitions and one way for broadcasters and educators to do so it to ask to be briefed on the Association's activities. Openings for collaboration will appear. Take it step by step; make friends and that way, influence people.

We have had, together, notable successes in the past with the mega-projects such as literacy. Let those be the exception to the rule. There is an enormous amount to be achieved in the minor ventures. For example, in 1984 the Schools Library Service in Central Region co-operated with BBC Scotland Schools to provide a bibliography for students of modern studies following the Newsfront series. The result was a superb piece of work, impossible for broadcasters to provide but invaluable for teachers. Similarly, in promoting a Radio Scotland daily magazine programme, libraries were able to distribute thousands of leaflets; in the process of this exercise, several stories about the library services turned up and were featured on the programme.

An everyday function of libraries is very often lost on colleague agencies in education and broadcasting and that is the information service. Libraries are professional mediators of information in all its forms, yet this simple fact seems lost on so many people in adult education and the media. For the moment, that is OK by me. I have the run of information services in my authority which I use mercilessly for professional purposes. No researcher I have ever employed can match the voice on the end of the telephone at the reference section. Many libraries will provide briefing files if you define your needs and negotiate a time-scale.

Librarians can also tell colleague agencies what is likely to be successful in comunicating information in libraries. Your poster, carefully produced with an eye for lay-out, colour, taste and clarity, will be one of hundreds in the entrance hall to my local library. Maybe the answer is free bookmarks or a handbill. Ask the librarian: she or he will know. It was advice from libraries which re-shaped the adult literacy posters and much of BBC Education's subsequent publicity.

Literacy, though it was anomalous in scale and achievement, should be remembered as a triumph of inter-agency work which eventually influenced the

government of the United Kingdom. Politicians may react to Newsnight or fume at Panorama but it was a coalition of broadcasters, educators and librarians making a successful learning project which pressed a new policy, new agencies and actual cash from the Department of Education and Science and the Scottish Education Department. We did that together. We heaved, and we shifted central government.

But the real future is in mutual help in lots of smaller projects, business deals and back-scratching. The first step is to personalise the relationships. Get to know your friends as well as most people seem to know their enemies. 'The maniac in charge of our organisation' is a more familiar phrase in conversation than the merits of the man or woman in charge of the organisation next door. Educators and librarians in the local authorities are essentially like-minded in approach to their business. Invest in a pint soon. My last contact with my local library reference section and an SLA officer solved a problem which BBC Publications found intractable.

At a time when the bosses want to make libraries concentrate on facts and television is driven towards trivia, all educators should be closing ranks. The Scottish Library Service and its professionals are the sort of allies I want.

James Boyle is Production Manager, Educational Radio, BBC Scotland

A COMMUNITY EDUCATOR'S VIEW

Peter Kearney

Speaking on government cuts in education, a leading politician recently suggested that, rather than cutting places in education, the government should be attempting to change the public's perception of education. He went on to suggest that the way forward lay in understanding education as an on-going process, something to dip in and out of in much the same way as we now use public libraries. The point was extremely valid and the analogy very useful.

In Britain the general perception of education has until fairly recently been extremely limited and utilitarian. Charles Dickens' resounding attack on Victorian education in Hard Times may well have been a fiction. But in essence the ghost of Mr Gradgrind still influences the way education is generally perceived. What most people understand by education in Britain is something which begins at five years of age and ends at sixteen, is conducted in institutions known as schools, and is governed by certain Education Acts which make it compulsory. The school system itself was, and to a large extent still is, designed to concentrate on the six per cent of the population who are deemed capable of higher education.

In other parts of Europe and in North America the percentage of the population in higher education is much greater. In North America particularly, higher education is much more open in its approach to the public, and generally free from the intellectual and social snobbery which is still attached to British education. Allowing for the admittedly instrumental bias within North American education, there remains a greater degree of tolerance of those who wish to change career later in life or retrain or upgrade existing skills and qualifications.

If the British educational system's ability to change is sluggish, the picture is not entirely one of gloom and doom. The official perception of education is slowly beginning to change. Admittedly this in in fact because of the enforced leisure which is being inflicted on large sections of society due to unemployment, and the fact that within the next ten years there will be many more thousands of active pensioners who have spare time on their hands. The money is not being made available to make the significant changes required to respond to their situation. Nevertheless, there have been a number of developments in education generally, and in what we call adult education in particular.

Within higher education, universities are becoming more open and accessible. There are an increasing number of part-time undergraduate degree programmes, and recently a number of Scottish universities have been developing 'access' courses to qualify and prepare mature students for degree programmes.

The picture within local authority adult education is varied. In Central Region a unit has been developed from the existing literacy provision and funded through the Urban Programme, thereby extending the scope of adult basic education. In other regions Community Education Departments have taken on board similar activities. In many areas, however, the provision of adult education is confined to the standard evening class model - or non-existent.

The development of community-based adult education has also been assisted by the Open University's Community Course Programme. Courses in this programme

are designed for people with little or no post-school educational experience. Based on the concept of 'living with change', the courses are student-centred, meaning that they focus on the practical experience and needs of the individual student, and have titles such as 'The Pre-School Child', 'Childhood 5-10' and 'Parents and Teenagers'. What has become clear is that there is a demand for educational provision which is flexible, informal and open. While the concept of educational provision aimed at particular groups such as 'the unemployed' can sometimes prove nebulous, there appears nevertheless to be a need to provide education designed for specific groups such as older people.

Libraries have always been aware of their educational responsibilities. Within Stirling District links between the adult education service and the District libraries are good. The local adult education tutor has a regular contact within Library Headquarters which has resulted in the library service being able to respond in a number of ways.

Initial contacts between adult education and the libraries developed from the literacy campaign. Library staff in some cases provided a source of volunteers and an outlet for information. Special sessions within libraries for people with literacy problems also proved a good idea and helped to break down the initial fears which people with literacy difficulties may find when trying to make use of library facilities. These activities have the added advantage in that they helped to make library staff more sensitive to the problems of people with reading difficulties.

From the initial contact other areas of common interest developed. Visits were arranged to reference collections for students engaged in return to study or study skills courses. A brief guide through the reference section with an experienced reference librarian can prove useful to students about to begin Open University courses or to study at college with little or no post-school study experience. Special visits have also been arranged for community groups and local history groups to the library's local collection. These visits have proved extremely popular and were combined with visits by librarians to community organisations such as the senior citizens' groups, also with material from the local collection.

The provision of an outreach service by libraries has proved significant in other aspects of community education. Liaison between community education workers and the libraries has proved important in developing contacts for the housebound reader service. In this case contacts were made with the local Age Concern volunteers and links made with those people who could make use of the service. Similarly, the choice of sites for the mobile library was discussed with community groups and the local community education worker in order that the mobile library could be situated at focal points within the community. The outreach approach has also been used to develop a small library within the local community centre. This facility is attended by volunteers and initially was aimed at young people. In this respect, local schools were encouraged to become involved and a visit was arranged to the community centre library by local primary school children.

It is important that libraries also respond to the needs of specialist groups as well as helping the public in general. The provision of a special evening for those with reading difficulties is one aspect of this already mentioned. However, local library staff are also involved in the local Community Relations Council, and are in the process of building up a collection aimed at ethnic minorities. This concept has been extended to include bringing together a small collection of material on machine knitting to provide for a group of people who work at domestic mechine knitting.

Making resources available to community groups also extends to the library buildings themselves. Here the use of the term 'community library' as opposed to branch library is significant. In Stirling the local history group meets regularly in one of the pleasant and well-designed community libraries, and library staff help in the organisation of the group and have given talks to them.

It is possible, however, that the general facilities of the library service could be put to better use in adult education. As with the development of the general concept of adult education, there is a growing awareness of the need to broaden the idea of education, and in this sense libraries undoubtedly have a major role to play. Staff, both libraries and assistants, need to be aware of this role rather than being seen simply as dispensers of books for leisure reading. This often requires a sympathy with readers who may be put off by the atmosphere of many of our older public libraries. It may also be the case that the post-literacy society anticipated by writers such as Marshall McLuhan has reached many sections of our society. In this case the written word may well have to be 'marketed'. The term has bad connotations for those in the public sector and within education in particular. Nevertheless, the idea may need to be confronted.

Perhaps, however, the concept needs to be more that of a sensitive response and anticipation of demand rather than a marketing approach. Being aware of local developments in the educational field seems essential from the librarian's point of view. Responding to the activities within community and adult education, as well as vocational and non-vocational further education classes, could go some way towards anticipating demands. Making library stock available as close to the point of demand as possible could also help in this direction. In this case, the use of local community centres, housing offices or other focal points within communities, and perhaps the use of relevant information packages or small specialist collections, could prove helpful. This type of response has to be made in close liaison with other agencies and community groups. The development of information requires a commitment of resources which would be difficult to meet given the existing economic climate. Nevertheless, it is one way in which libraries could play a major role in the field of community education. Again, the much wider use of library buildings for community education groups perhaps requires a commitment of staffing which might be difficult to meet under the present circumstances.

Community based adult education is a relatively new and exciting field. The resources available at the moment for this type of work are limited. However, the opportunities are there for libraries to become involved. The world of a community based adult education tutor can at times be an isolated one, but it is impossible to operate effectively without the support of other agencies. Because of the often ill-defined role of a community based adult education worker, the response has tended to become that of a catch-all, and at times the denger is that of encompassing too many approaches, becoming all things to all people and consequently losing a clear focus.

It would be manifestly wrong and naive to assume that community based adult education offers a solution to all of society's problems or that other agencies with a more established role do not have an important part to play in adult education. No service can operate entirely in isolation. If education is to be made as open as the library service now is, then the need for co-operation appears essential.

Peter Kearney is Adult Education Tutor, Central Regional Council

A LIBRARIAN'S VIEW

James Orr

Let's not waste time or words in this brief account by attempting a definition of education. Too much has probably been written on this topic, admittedly most of it relating to the formal structures society has created to educate its population. Certainly too much time has been wasted in the public library sector debating a distinction between education and recreation when in fact the grey area which exists between the two is so large that it tends to make the debate futile, and, in any case, it is clear that the public rate-supported libraries have to cater for both these needs. Having said that, in times of economic recession and lack of resources, libraries may have to prioritise their objectives and it would be unfortunate if the educational role of libraries was in any way diminished by an over-provision of the leisure, or more precisely, the gratification level of literature provided.

However, my brief is the happy one of assuming an ideal world. That ideal clearly would be a situation in which libraries had access to the necessary finances to maintain the resources of stock, staff and buildings necessary to a really effective library service at all levels required.

I suppose in an ideal world everyone would need, and know that they needed, education interpreted in its broadest sense. In fact they do, although in many cases it is a latent rather than a conscious requirement by the individual. That is not to say that all individuals are necessarily going to acquire their education from libraries.

Taking the widest possible definition of education - an experience from which an understanding emerges and a lesson is learned which affects the future behaviour of the individual - then there are many influences on individuals in addition to what they acquire from the use of library stocks. Learning is acquired from the environment of family, friends, casual acquaintances and more formally from the social organisations which communicate for their own purposes. Political and religious groups, organised formal education at primary, secondary and tertiary level, and the mass media of press, broadcasting, cinema, theatre and the book trade are all channels which impart education. In many instances individuals will be satisfied with what is received from their choice of media without recourse to libraries.

The influences of all of these can be very considerable: they can be very good; they can often be indifferent and, I suppose, occasionally downright misleading and harmful. If I may ride one hobby horse at this point, it would be to encourage the formal education system to nurture an understanding of the subtleties of good, indifferent and bad in all communications. There is no system which is totally pure or totally impure. An ability to identify the difference and select is one of the most important lessons to be learned, and it is particularly important for the library user.

The major difference between use of a library for educational purposes and the use of the other systems mentioned is that all of the other systems by their very nature tend to be biased towards a broad creed or line of thought; the mass media particularly are concerned with masses and not with the individual. Libraries on the other hand offer a much wider degree of freedom of choice at a given time and are therefore capable of producing programmes tailor-made to suit an individual's needs at a particular time. This is the strength of the

library system and it is that on which it should build.

The influence of libraries on adult education has always been very considerable and still is. All formal education systems have created their own libraries for the free use of their students and more and more nowadays are specifically educating their users in the use of these libraries so that they derive the fullest benefits from them. It was clearly a natural development for any formal system such as the 18th century SPCK and Methodist Societies, the 19th century Mechanics Institutes and the late 19th century and early 20th century adult education programmes of universities and the WEA, to supply their students with books.

Arguably, however, the greatest library development of all in allowing access to library stocks for the total population, was the development of the public rate-supported library movement. Given our ideal resource base, the development of adult education programmes within the formal education system will naturally generate additional library resources for those joining the system. The historical record is good and there is no reason to believe that this will not continue.

Equally so, the record of the public rate-supported library movement is excellent. Overall they have co-operated fully with the formal education system whenever required and will clearly do so in the future. It is difficult to envisage an ideal of unlimited resources and there will always be some need to rationalise provision by means of co-operation. For instance, an educational programme may require to be resourced with materials other than information sources - a current example being computer hardware. Whilst there are examples of some public libraries beginning to provide micros, they can only really be of use to those who have some understanding of how to use them and that is obtained from the formal education system. Libraries should not compete with this but complement it. The best way of complementing is to offer the users free choice and this is inherent in the present situation, but more could be done.

Given the resources, there is no reason why public libraries should not undertake more user education programmes as has been done in the educational library field. Whilst the practice of allowing open access to its stock greatly increased the effectiveness of public libraries, it also encouraged users to 'do it themselves': an excellent method for browsing and serendipity, but equally avoiding the contact with the professional librarian with more knowledge of stock and the complex systems of indexing and classification, a more detailed knowledge of which is most useful to the more serious user. Public libraries have a broad knowledge of the overall use made of their stock, and little knowledge of particular individual's needs; much more could be done to identify these. There really needs to be a concentrated effort to encourage users to notify their library of their specific needs, the library creating a profile of those needs and making sure that these needs are met from the library's present stock, with notification of new stock being sent to the user. This is a practice well developed in the special library field, but remains untapped in public libraries.

The public library can also act as a gateway. It can do so firstly, by means of inter-library loan to stocks not held by a particular library, a system already well developed; secondly, by means of co-operation with all other communication systems which might aid the user; and thirdly, by means of referral systems to individual experts who may help users. Let us take two hypothetical examples.

Adult citizen X has purchased a micro for personal use; directions and instructions have been read and in the main understood; appropriate software has been purchased; the games have been played and are beginning to bore; and some success has been achieved in applying the system to household budgeting and possibly to word-processing applications. A level of understanding has been reached; keyboard skills have been sharpened; but some dissatisfaction creeps in and there are now two choices. The easy route is to opt out and sell out; this is the choice often taken, as the small ads in the press proclaim.

The more difficult, but more exciting route, is to reach for a greater understanding of the wider world of computer applications, good, bad and indifferent. This is obtained by means of formal courses, informal contact with persons with more expertise and access to reading and other materials. Citizen X may know of the existence or probable existence of a formal course to which she may have access; she may know other micro-users she can contact; and she may have enough money to purchase books, periodicals etc from the local bookshops' local stocks. But she may not. If she does not, at least we should make sure that the local library will supply the books and periodicals, obtain the information about possible courses, and perhaps even hold a file (on a computer, of course) of the names of other interested persons in the immediate area and, perhaps by means of networks, in other areas.

Citizen Y has no micro because he has little money - he is unemployed. He is unemployed partly because of a lack of literacy and partly because organised industry has no use for the skills he has which are mainly in his hands. He can also opt out, obtain social security and do nothing. Alternatively, he can put the skills he has to use, but he needs refresher courses and he needs ideas. A public library should be able to help by the means outlined.

Readers can obviously think of many other such hypothetical examples and, whilst often the course of opting out is the one which will be taken, just as often, help will be needed. The library system should be organised to give every possible assistance. The adult education movement too should be prepared not only to be reactive in helping those who wish to be helped, but to be proactive in helping those who wish to opt out.

Clearly, not every single member of the public is going to join a library service nor are many of them going to make more than a browsing use of the service. But it is difficult to believe that there is not some percentage of the population who wish to pursue an information enquiry - for fact, knowledge or understanding - and who would not be helped by a more structured approach to library services.

James Orr is Head, School of Librarianship and Information Studies, Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology

Epilogue

AN EDUCATIONAL FORCE!

Arthur Maltby

Scotland, apart from being geographically distinctive, is a conveniently sized area for reviewing the achievement and possibilities of libraries working in tandem with adult and community education in all their aspects. This publication is somewhat unusual in juxtaposing the perspective and predictions of individuals with a synopsis - based on snapshot surveys in 1983 and 1985 - of the actual activities, initiatives and problems of the 41 public library services. The surveys gave librarians an opportunity to speak their mind, although they were particularly asked about publicity and back-up services for adult education work and about links between the educators and local librarians.

Clearly, the strength of these links varies and, like the education itself, they are sometimes quite informal. Some of us would see the library or resources centre as the most natural place in or through which to learn and each user may define 'learn' in the widest or most appropriate sense. Yet, although libraries have provided good reference and information services for years, by and large these are startlingly under-appreciated by all but the core of dedicated users. Incidentally, it is also disturbing to find (apart from the demise of the book element) so few references to libraries in the predictions for a future knowledge industry within the works of such writers as Toffler, Stonier or Drucker.

This present publication reveals Scottish libraries as a considerable force in support of all forms of continuing education. It asks both implicitly and explicitly - why are they not always seen that way? Clearly, as is suggested above, reasons are varied. The growing range of library services and media is known to too few. They are linked with leisure for the most part, not only in local government structures but in the public mind. Many users are of a kind who see their library visits as recreation rather than a form of learning, some of them - as well as non-users - perhaps subscribing to the amusing dictim in Barbara Pym's novel A Glass of Blessings : 'People who went to evening classes were all more or less odd. It was unnatural to want to acquire knowledge after working hours.'

Others may have found educational material in the library too academic or high-powered. Fortunately, many libraries are responding to this through the provision of community information services and by individual service points becoming sensitive to the character and individuality of their local community. Libraries may well need to pinpoint specific individual and group priority needs rather than seeking to serve a vague amorphous throng called general readers.

But many people are simply 'switched off' by words like learning or education. They evoke thoughts of school and its curriculum, although of necessity much 'learning' must take place out of school hours and continue after the years of compulsory education. In some cases this learning may be promoted by, or benefit from, the maturity, motivation or needs of an older person. An important aspect is that it springs from a person's own wishes and so must be determined, even directed, in part by the learner. That detached and very readable observer of computing and communication developments, Murray Laver (1983), has wondered if electronics will replace the 3Rs with the 3Ps - pushbuttons, pictures and programs. I would argue that equally important for

the future are the 3Ss - self-supported study. This requires thoughtful tutoring, the creation of a structure for the sound management of learning, the imparting of some skills concerning how to learn and a wide learning resources environment - the last surely a crucial part of any planned programme of support.

Learning can concern so many different subjects or hobbies, at so many levels and with so many learning methods. But it is difficult to convince people of this if, in a phrase used in the advertising literature for UNESCO's Fourth International Conference on Adult Education (Paris, 1984), they have persuaded themselves that learning is essentially 'a cultural luxury to be saved for some future date' or, worse still, if they have dismissed it forever as too intellectual and arid, impossible to enjoy and not leading to any goal desired or perceived as advantageous.

At the risk of gross over-simplification, our adult society may be said to have four broad educational divisions. These are:

-the very well-educated, some of whom continue their 'education', often informally, in various ways;
-the less well, though perhaps adequately, educated, who grasp further opportunities and become adult learners in one form or another;
- the ill-educated, or those whose skills have rusted, who return to educational basics as adults;
- the less well-educated and the ill-educated who choose to remain that way.

What F W H Myers wrote in his 19th century imaginative poem St Paul is true in an educational as well as a religious sense. The apostle sees many people as

> Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings
> Hearing their hope with but an empty wonder
> Sadly contented with a show of things.

Perhaps Myers shared what the poem goes on to describe as a 'craving' to help rectify matters - and in the educational context too, for he became an HMI!

Adults who dismiss their educational hope may not know what they are missing, provided 'learning' is defined wisely and widely. It may involve physics or philosophy. It might equally well concern bridge, Karate, conversational Spanish, the improvement of numeracy, money management, or playing a musical instrument. Community education in its various forms is striving to improve people's ratings in my crude classification above, without giving any sense of patronage, and to convince some that such improvement would be worthwhile. Social changes and economic difficulty simply underline the extent of the challenge, so the adult and community educators certainly need links with libraries for stock support, as local outlets for their advertising literature, and at times for accommodation.

Anthony Cooke points out above that the Alexander Report's proposal for the appointment of library staff to link with adult educators has been affected by continuing financial restraint, but clearly existing personnel should give (and in some cases are giving) time to this. Of course, there are real constraints - shortage of funds to enhance stock appropriately, lack of staff time, accommodation problems in some libraries for proposed community education activities, potential sensitivities at the regional/district interface - but this publication surely illustrates from existing examples that there is scope for fruitful co-operation and information exchange.

The learning resource riches of libraries must be used and promoted effectively. Curiously, librarians didn't react to politician Peter Walker's (1977) idea about 'positive canvassing' nearly a decade ago. But his recognition of a 'remarkable public library system' which should coax more people to read and his suggestion that the 'creation of a well-read nation would go a long way towards achieving equality of opportunity' must strike a responsive chord even in (some would say especially in) a time when we are so acutely aware of technological possibilities. Although many citizens are library users in one capacity or another, there certainly remains scope for promoting many of their services and not least the help available to actual and potential adult learners.

The libraries need suitable material and facilities to assist in the wide range of basic adult learning situations outlined by Pablo Foster. At best they provide for such people and many other students an environment for learning what one wishes, in privacy, at one's own pace, and via a choice of learning resources. Where possible, adult learners should be directed to suitably identified material (libraries being warned in good time), thus perhaps eliminating some work of the fundamental chalk and talk variety and saving valuable tutor time for discussion, problem solving or counselling. Specialist collections of value (not to mention a host of useful telephone numbers) are identified in the Scottish Library Association's Scottish Library and Information Resources 1984/85 .

But what adult learners and their tutors need to know, at grass roots level, are the answers to questions such as the following:

* If I've started a course on basic reading skills or English as a foreign language and live near Kelso or Kilmarnock, Falkirk or Halkirk, in what ways can the library help me?

* I saw details in Elgin library of a distance learning course on office organisation run by a North of Scotland college. If I enrol, are there other ways in which the library can help?

* My home is in Lerwick. How do I find out about open learning opportunities in a certain technology - and what local support exists?

* I'm taking the Glasgow University adult education programme course in 'the history of sin' (it does exist!). What background reading can my local library service provide?

* Will librarians searching British Books in Print or other information sources for material on a subject be aware of specialised 'extra bibliographic' sources like OU learning packs?

* Our local community education classes have this year introduced 'pottery', 'world problems' and 'women in modern society'. Have we alerted our public library service?

Though Shakespeare was fond of writing epilogues, one of his characters suggests that they are redundant if the main work covers the ground. That leaves little enough excuse for this one, but writing it does give an opportunity to sum up and to say how much I hope this publication will stimulate further fruitful contacts and discussion between adult educators and local library services - and not only in Scotland. Adult learning openings and flexible, negotiated methods of study are alike on the increase and indeed,

there will be much restructuring in education within the next quarter century.

Libraries, often sadly forgotten or underestimated in the context of continuing education, could play a significant part. They need to be seen as centre-stage, to use Nigel Paine's expression, rather than a peripheral or an optional add-on. The reading of this work, plus the full responses from the librarians, suggested to me that libraries do represent a very powerful, if sometimes latent, educational force. But if the current is to flow, as it were, the community educators must be 'plugged in' to what the libraries can offer; the librarians to what the educators are doing, to the identification of adult users with learning needs, and to the impediments to effective study or to the use of the library's materials. These things will help to 'switch on' more people to the genuine pleasures and satisfaction of learning and will make those library lights shine even more brightly!

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